

# The Big Four: Rise of the Brave Tangled Dragons

by ROTBTD

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Summary: Rated T cause I'm paranoid. Basically the four worlds of these heroes have become connected, with potentially dire consequences if they cannot put aside their differences and stop the plans of the evil they thought they had vanquished. Summary sucks, I know. Canon pairings. Unfortunately I don't own ROTG or HTTYD. First fanfic, please read and review!

## 1. Chapter 1: Hiccup

### Chapter One

#### Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup sighed as he slipped out of the village. Sure, he had saved everyone and gotten a girlfriend out of the deal, but did he have to lose his leg in the process? He made his way carefully through the brush until he reached Toothless.

"Hey, buddy." He called in greeting. He then laughed as the large black dragon tackled him and proceeded to sniff him all over, ears perking when the scent of fish was located. "Alright, alright, but I can't unless you get off me!"

Toothless backed off, tail flicking back and forth slightly. When Hiccup threw the fish, Toothless snapped it out of the air in the blink of an eye. He then looked at Hiccup hopefully.

Hiccup sighed and laughed again. "You want more, work for it!" He then wasted no more time getting the saddle set up on Toothless. Should he have told Stoic where he was going? Nah, he had seen a note there seeming to explain that he was going out and if he had actually approached his father, Stoic may not have let him go off on his own.

As Toothless took off with a mighty beat of his wings, Hiccup let out a happy shout. "Now this is more like it!" He announced happily as he

guided Toothless towards the ocean. He frowned when he felt a rumble pass through the dragon's body. Was he growling at something? The next moment his stomach dropped as Toothless went into a steep dive, landing on a secluded rock. Hiccup peered at the cave that Toothless was snorting at. He moved to get off, but Toothless shifted, throwing Hiccup off balance so that he landed back in the saddle. "Keeping me where I can be protected, huh?" Hiccup asked. "So, ahhhhhhh, what's the story?"

His hesitant question was answered when the cave glowed brightly and then settled into a swirling vortex. Was that a smell of...mint? "Is it just me, Toothless, or does it seem like going in there, while normally a very, very bad idea, seems to be the right thing to do?"

Toothless snorted uneasily, but the dragon seemed to share the sentiment as he leapt headfirst into the glow, Hiccup holding tightly to the saddle.

When Hiccup's vision cleared, the first thing he noticed was the cold. It was freezing outside. "Okay, something tells me this isn't Berk anymore." He muttered. A flash interrupted his thoughts, and he whipped his head around to see whatever had brought him here had vanished. "That's a problem." He muttered.

He then let out a very un-Viking like yelp when he heard a strangely accented voice say, "Oi, this lil' anklebittah really the one we're lookin' for?"

Hiccup turned his head to see the biggest rabbit he had ever laid eyes upon looking at him speculatively. "What did we get ourselves into, Toothless?" He asked the dragon. He then frowned as he noticed the smiling blonde next to the rabbit. "Astrid?"

## 2. Chapter 2: Rapunzel

### Chapter Two

#### Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel ran a hand through her hair, letting out a sigh. Being a princess was a definite step up from being locked in a tower with a surrogate mother, but the freedom she had imagined wasn't quite as...free...as she would have liked. She looked behind her as Eugene slipped into the room.

"Why the long face, blondie?" He asked with a grin.

"Oh, Eugene, is it wrong of me to want to go back?" She asked him, biting her lip.

He blinked. "To the tower?" He sputtered.

Rapunzel shook her head, sending her hair swinging around her. "No, no, back to the life we were leading before..." She sighed and indicated the palace with a sweep of her hand.

Eugene nodded. "You're feeling stressed and a little caged in?"

Rapunzel nodded. "Uh-huh."

Eugene smirked. "Well, good, that saves me the trouble of convincing you." He announced, grabbing her hand. "I've got somewhere I want to show you. Your parents have agreed." He added when she started to resist.

Rapunzel's eyes brightened immediately as she grabbed Pascal off a windowsill and placed the chameleon on her shoulder. "Then what are we waiting for?"

As she followed Eugene out of the town and into the woods, her brow furrowed as she saw a shadowed alcove. "Eugene?"

Eugene gave her shoulder a reassuring squeeze. "You're fine, blondie."

Rapunzel squeaked when there was a flash that resolved itself into what she immediately identified as some sort of portal. Looked like those books were useful after all. She looked at Eugene, and, at his smiling nod, she followed him into it.

When the glow faded, she gasped as she looked around the large building she was in. "Is this a palace?" She asked Eugene, wide-eyed.

"No, this is the North Pole." A cheerful female voice cut in.

Rapunzel gasped and whirled to see a...fairy? The fairy smiled, showing off her perfect teeth. The fairy zipped over to Rapunzel, looking at her from every angle so that Rapunzel got slightly dizzy from trying to track the rapid movements. "So, do you brush every night? Floss?" The fairy inquired, opening Rapunzel's mouth to inspect her dental hygiene.

"Wha? Ah!" Rapunzel protested, trying to break away.

"Enough, enough." Eugene stepped in, freeing Rapunzel.

"Oops!" The fairy exclaimed, feathers fluffing briefly in embarrassment. "I get a little carried away sometimes. But your teeth are beautiful!" She then turned pensive. "Though not as pretty as Jack's..." She mumbled to herself.

"Tacks?" Rapunzel asked in confusion.

"No, Jack's." Eugene clarified, in a voice letting her know he was well used to the fairy's ditzy ways.

"So, are you the one?" She asked, violet eyes boring into Rapunzel.

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I realize that this has probably been mislabeled, but since it's my first time, hopefully it'll work out.

### 3. Chapter 3: Merida

#### Chapter Three

##### Merida DunBroch

Merida hummed a tune to herself as she finished pulling arrows out of targets. She slid the arrows that were still good into her quiver, then looked up when she heard her mother calling her name.

"Coming!" Merida replied as she dashed up the stairs, almost tripping over her three brothers. She almost halted when she realized that they seemed to be trying to sneak into the armory, then shrugged and continued. She was sure someone else would catch the wee devils. Or, at least, she hoped someone would. Her pace slowed as she ran out of breath, but then she saw the queen and crossed over to her. "Yes, mum?"

"Merida." The queen said in satisfaction. "There you are, I've been calling for you!"

"Yes, I didn't hear until just now." Merida apologized.

Elinor made a negative gesture. "It's all right, you're here now."

"Everything going okay?" Merida asked suspiciously. Since when was her mum not worried about punctuality?

The queen sighed. "No...not really. Merida...you're going on a journey, for the good of the kingdom. Your father and I have been told of a great threat that seeks to doom us all, and were told that because of certain qualities you have, you are the one that must help."

Merida stared at her mum. At the suggestion of an adventure, a thrill ran through her body. "What's the threat? I'm not...doing this alone, am I?"

Her mum shook her head. "No, you're not alone. The ones that notified me said to let them explain, when you arrive. You're allowed to take companions, of course, but your father and I are needed here and your brothers would impede, not help."

Merida shrugged. "I'll take Angus." She replied. She then wrapped her arms around her mum, giving her one final hug. "I'll come back, I promise." She murmured into her mum's shoulder. She then stepped back, taking a steadying breath. "So, mum, did this person say how I was to get where I'm goin'?"

Elinor nodded. "Yes, but get your horse ready. Your father is having Maudie get your weapons together, all other things will be provided. Now go, and best of luck go with you."

Merida nodded and left the great hall, heading down to the stables. "Hello Angus, ready for an adventure?" She asked the horse as she saddled the large Clydesdale. She turned when Maudie pattered up, holding a bundle of possessions. "Thanks." Merida said, taking the bundle and fixing it to the saddle.

She then swung herself onto Angus's back as her father looked up at her. "The circle."

Merida frowned as her father walked away, then realized that he was fighting not to blubber like he did sometimes when worked up. "I love ya, Dad!" She called to him before kicking her heels into Angus to thunder down the path to the stone circle. As she approached it, a spinning glow appeared between the two nearest stones.

"Looks like an invitation to me." Merida decided, and for once, Angus seemed to agree.

When the glow cut out, Merida found Angus was standing in a stable. "Ah! There she is!" A booming voice sounded. Merida looked up to see a large man walking towards her.

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Yes, I realize that these are short, bear with me, I promise they'll get longer!

#### 4. Chapter 4: Jack Frost

##### Chapter Four

##### Jack Frost

Jack smiled as he landed at Burgess Lake. He had finished creating a snow day for Jamie and his friends, and was debating whether or not to drop in on North to chat for a while. He then frowned when he noticed a green glow reflected off the mirror-like ice covering his pond. When he glanced up, his eyes widened as he took in the sight of the Northern Lights.

Without a second thought, he had summoned up a strong wind to launch him into the sky and towards the Pole. Looked like that chat was a yes. When he flew through the window always kept open for him, he noticed that everyone else was already there. "Ah, man, I'm late again?" He sighed as he landed next to Sandy. "So, what's wrong now?"

Sandy tugged his pant leg, and Jack looked down to see the diminutive spirit rapidly forming shapes of dream sand. Jack knelt down as he tried to decipher what looked like a...dragon? No, now it was a bow, and a horse. And a frog. "Um, yeah, not helping, Sandy, but 'A' for effort." He said, mimicking North's words. Sandy recognized this and his face lit up with a huge smile.

"Come, the others are waiting!" North bellowed good naturedly.

Jack stood quickly, his grip on his staff tightening. "Others." Despite a sinking feeling in his gut, he followed North into one of the reception areas, where he saw three strangers in a heated debate. "North?" He asked.

He then cursed himself mentally as the attention of the ones who had been arguing was turned to him. He waved slightly. "Um, hi."

A girl with about 70 feet of hair snickered. "Wow, and here I thought

you were the clammed up one." She teased a short boy wearing furs.

"I at least gave my name!" The boy protested.

"Oh, well, fine." Jack muttered as he walked up to them. "The name's Jack Frost."

"Nice." The other boy smirked. "I'm Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III."

Jack raised an eyebrow at Hiccup. "And you thought my name was strange."

Hiccup shrugged. "Frightful names keep away the trolls."

Jack nodded slowly, then looked at the two females.

"I'm Princess Merida, of the clan DunBroch." A girl with a huge head of flame-red curls announced.

"Princess Rapunzel Fitzherbert." Supplied the blonde with impossible hair.

"Makes sense." Jack admitted. "So, oh! Hey! Anyone wanna tell me why we're here?" He then grinned at North. "And why am I having deja vu?"

North's loud laughter filled the room momentarily. "I tell you why! We need your help!"

Jack shrugged. "Already a Guardian, North. I don't get it."

"This ain't about bein' a Guardian, mate." Bunnymund interjected as he hopped in.

"Oh, you are here, Kangaroo!" Jack exclaimed, eyes lighting with mischief.

"Wha-what did you just call me?" Bunny demanded, looming over Jack.

"Whoa whoa whoa!" Tooth interrupted as she separated the two. "Not now."

Jack sighed. "Still don't know what's going on." He prompted.

"Eh...is long story." North rumbled.

Jack walked over to a convenient chair and plopped down, frost immediately collecting on the folds of fabric. "I've got time."

The three other teens followed suit. North sighed. "Very well. From what we have learned your four worlds have become...connected. Is how we were able to contact your parents."

Jack snorted. "Not mine, of course."

"Jack." North sighed. When the winter sprite lifted his hands in a

gesture of surrender, North nodded. "And, as such, the darker sides of your worlds have connected as well. Jack, of course, you know Pitch...Hiccup, well, no specific enemy of yours but your world is involved nonetheless...Merida, the same for you, though Tooth has heard rumors of another demon bear...and, Rapunzel you know her as Gothel."

North looked around, seeing the paled faces looking back at him.

Jack was the first to recover. "Pitch? But...we sent him back into his hole two years ago! That's impossible."

"That's years that Pitch has been gettin' stronger again, mate." Bunny cut in. "And information says he's been in contact with this Gothel sheila."

Rapunzel blinked. "She-wha?"

Jack shook his head. "Don't bother, it's just the Kangaroo's accent."

"I'm a bunny. The EASTER bunny." Bunny snapped irritably.

Merida stared. "You've got to be joking."

Jack grinned at her, leaning against his staff. "Oh, yeah. We've got the Sandman, the Tooth Fairy, and Santa Claus too." He felt Sandy's hand on his shoulder and sighed. "And me." He added sullenly.

Rapunzel nodded. "I have books about all of you." She said, flushing a bit like she hadn't meant to say that. "Erm, it didn't say that you worked together, though."

Jack looked at her in surprise. "Wait, you've heard of me?"

"Obviously, mate, they could all see you, ya gumby!"

Jack cleared his throat. "Still not used to being believed in, kay?" That shut Bunny up.

Rapunzel looked at him in confusion. "What does belief have to do with it?"

"If child not believe in us, they cannot see or hear us." North explained uncomfortably. "And Jack not believed in for 300 years."

Hiccup stared at Jack. "That stinks, but, um, how old are you?"

"320, give or take?" Jack replied, an impish grin on his face.

Merida sighed. "Well, I'll just ask wot we're all wondering. What can you do?"

Jack laughed. "I thought you'd never ask!" He said cheerfully,

freezing an elf who had been trying to sneak a pair of shoes on him. He sent it sliding down the hall, bowling over several other elves before the frozen one finally was freed from the icy shell. It got up immediately and started cavorting once more.

"Not bad." Merida admitted, looking back to Jack's empty seat.  
"Wha-Jack?"

"Up here." Jack announced, leaning against a rafter with one leg swinging down. "You didn't think that was it, did you?" He summoned a gust of wind to deposit him back on the ground, but not before the wind blew him into a backflip playfully. He laughed along with the wind as he was set on the ground. "And, yeah, I can do more, but my magic belongs outside."

Merida nodded. "Good to know. So, that makes me the only normal one, then."

Hiccup huffed. "I'm perfectly-"

"You ride a dragon." Rapunzel pointed out.

"You have 70 feet of magic hair that glows and can heal any hurt known to man and reverse the effects of aging." He retorted.

Merida threw her hands in the air. "See what I mean?"

North pinched the bridge of his nose, then turned to a group of elves. "Dingle!" He refrained from rolling his eyes as every elf immediately pointed at itself, standing to attention. "Make guest rooms ready, we're not getting any further tonight."

Jack perked up. "So, meeting's over?"

North sighed and nodded as the elves scampered off. "Yes, Jack."

"Yeah!" Jack whooped, making to leave the room. He then looked back at the others. "C'mon, I'll show you guys around."

Merida shrugged. "We already got a tour while we were waiting for you to show up."

Jack smiled. "But I'm giving you the fun tour."

Rapunzel got up, brushing her hair back. "Well, sounds okay to me." A small squeaking noise came from her, and a green reptile clambered onto the top of her head.

"What's the story with the frog?" Jack asked, recognizing it from Sandy's images.

"Chameleon." Rapunzel corrected. "His name's Pascal, he's my friend."

"Fair enough." Jack decided. He looked at Hiccup and Merida.  
"Well?"

"I don't have anything else to do." Hiccup mumbled as he stood up.



"Ach, well, I'm not getting left alone either." Merida protested.

"Let's go!" Jack called out, mimicking North. That earned him a laugh from the Guardians as he led the group out into the workshop.

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Hooray for horribly butchering accents. I try, I really do.

## 5. Chapter 5: 'Bonding' Time

### Chapter Five

Merida DunBroch

Merida looked around her as Jack led the group through the workshop, with him gaily pointing out things that North hadn't bothered to. The boy was right, this tour was much more enjoyable. She then frowned as a Yeti made a gruff sound, pointing a shaggy hand at Jack.

"Oh hey, Phil." Jack greeted the Yeti nonchalantly. "How's work?"

The yeti grunted some more in it's language, before tussling the top of Jack's head and getting back to what it was doing before. Jack laughed and turned to the ones he was guiding. "Before I was a Guardian I would always try to break into this place, and, uh, Phil's the one that caught me."

"So...you never actually got in." Rapunzel stated.

"In a word? No." Jack replied cheerfully. "Well, let's get out of their way for now."

Merida held back a laugh as they started moving again. Phil was repainting a pile of blue toys red, and the size comparison between the small red stack and the monstrous blue one was comical.

She then caught up to Jack, listening to him detail how, when the work at the Pole was done he'd often turn this particular hallway into a frozen lane for elf-bowling.

"It doesn't hurt them at all." He was reassuring the group. "And they love it, they'll all jump up and stand in crazy poses for me to freeze them into again."

"So can we try our hand at it?" Hiccup asked, eyeing the hallway.

Jack shrugged. "Sure, unless North has some reception party planned, which is highly likely. Consider yourselves warned, the guy is Santa after all."

Merida sighed. "I'm still having trouble reconciling that." She muttered.

Jack smirked. "Obviously you have, you can still see us." He pointed out.

Rapunzel shrugged. "But I do have one question. Some of us came here with other people, where are they?"

Jack blinked. "Just got here, remember? C'mon, let's find someone that knows what's going on." He suggested.

Hiccup sighed. "This place is huge though."

Jack shook his head. "Won't take long doing it my way." Thus saying he summoned a wind with a sweep of his staff, flying up around the globe and looking for one of the Guardians.

Merida sighed. "He's a bit of a show-off." She observed.

Rapunzel shrugged, nearly unseating Pascal. "Well, I dunno, he just seems to be really happy to be able to interact, y'know? I think he's just really happy right now, that after - what did he say? 300 years? - he's finally able to talk to others."

Merida nodded. "I can see that, it must have been so lonely."

A burst of frigid air announced Jack's arrival. He peered at them suspiciously. "Were you talking about me?" He asked.

Merida shook her head, face deadpan. "Did you find anyone?" She then noticed the small blue creature flitting by Jack's ear. "That doesn't count."

Jack made a face at her. "This is Baby Tooth." He announced, gesturing to the creature. "She's one of Tooth's mini fairies, her lieutenant, actually. She'll show us around."

Rapunzel, having been in conversation with a chameleon, made no move to disagree. As they followed the diminutive fairy, Jack would continue pointing things out as he deemed necessary to. Merida looked around, amazed, as they came to a strange cage contraption and stepped inside. "Wot's this for?" She murmured.

"This." Jack answered, pulling a lever in response. Merida gasped as the floor suddenly moved under her feet, carrying her upwards.

"Wow." Hiccup muttered, looking outside. "That's a little disconcerting."

When the upward motion ceased, Jack swung open the gate, knocking aside an elf driving a small motorcycle. Baby Tooth flitted ahead, leading the four to yet another meeting area, this time in front of a plaque on the floor with points representing all the Guardians. Baby Tooth chattered to Jack, and, surprisingly, he seemed to understand.

"Looks like yu and Jack can both talk to animals." Merida muttered to Rapunzel.

"In his defense, I don't think that a sentient fairy counts as an animal." Rapunzel countered. "Besides, Pascal is a friend, not any

animal."

Jack looked back at Merida. "I heard that, you know." He complained, but was cut short when a door was flung open and two people dashed out.

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>Aaaaaand yet another chapter. I warn you, the uploads are coming quickly because I've already got some of this typed up. Once I catch up to myself this'll stop the fast paced uploads. consider yourselves warned, and if you've actually made it this far, <em>please</em> review.

## 6. Chapter 6: Reunion and Bad News

### Chapter Six

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup had tuned out his surroundings when the bickering started back up, right on schedule. Honestly, they were worse than Ruffnut and Tuffnut. Well, on one of the twin's good days. The twins were pretty bad.

He blinked out of his reverie when he heard rapid footsteps, and then was nearly knocked over by a massive hug from Astrid. "Um, h-hey, Astrid."

He flushed red when he heard a whistle from Jack. "Looks like someone's taken."

He then realized that the comment wasn't aimed at him, as he noticed Rapunzel doing much the same thing to what would seem to either be her boyfriend or her husband. It must just be a girl thing, then. As Astrid stepped back, he offered her an uneasy smile. "So, ahhh, I'm assuming you know what's going on?"

"More or less." Astrid confirmed cheerfully. "We were kept under orders of silence, sorry." She looked at the other people assembled in the hall. "So, who are they?"

Hiccup sighed. "I just met them, you know." He muttered. He then sighed again, pointing out everyone whose name he remembered. Which was pretty much everyone, though he wasn't sure if he got the pronunciation on Merida's name right, it was a little hard to decipher the accent sometimes. He noticed Rapunzel doing the same for her companion, which made the atmosphere that much more awkward as Jack and Merida stood there. Well, Jack was fending off a horde of the small blue fairies, who seemed to be trying to get a look at his teeth.

Astrid regarded the scene amusedly. "Looks like Frosty has a fanclub." She commented.

Jack looked over at her. "Frosty is a snowman. I'm not a snowman, I'm a winter sprite."

Astrid shrugged. "Same difference, isn't it?"

Jack shook his head vehemently. "Big difference. You ever seen a snowman?" He asked, proving his point by tapping his staff against the ground, forming an image from frost of what appeared to be three circles, branches sticking out of the middle one, and a face and hat adorning the top circle.

Hiccup nodded slowly. "I suppose I could see where you're coming from."

Astrid rolled her eyes. "If you say so, Hiccup. I still don't see the big deal."

Jack huffed. "Because Frosty is annoying. And not in a good way like I am."

Merida cleared her throat. "Alright, okay. Can we just figure out the plan?"

Hiccup looked at the irate princess. "Do we know what we're dealing with?"

Jack sighed, rubbing the back of his head. "That where I come in, isn't it. Okay, okay, I need everyone to listen to me!" He called, getting everyone's attention. "As I'm sure you're all aware, we can't formulate any true plans until we all know what we're up against. Now, I'll go first, then Punzie can follow up."

He ignored Rapunzel's sputter and continued, "One of the ones we're up against, Pitch Black, well, he's not nice. He's the Boogeyman." He held up a hand before anyone could scoff. "He's basically the antithesis to the Sandman, who, as you know, wields magic sand that gives dreams to people. Well, Pitch's formal name is the Nightmare King. He uses nightmare sand, with all the connotations that possesses. He has underlings called Nightmares, which is pretty darn ironic since they're shaped like evil horses of doom. Um, he can tell what your greatest fears are just by looking at you, and can play some seriously messed up mind games with people because of it." Jack paused, obviously remembering something unpleasant, before continuing, "Um, basically, he's ruthless, a jerk, and not to be underestimated. Don't engage him alone, and you might be ok. Do go alone, and you're in trouble. Why? Because when you fight Pitch, you're fighting fear. Any questions?"

Hiccup shook his head, feeling Astrid move a little closer to him. Great. He had definitely gotten himself in trouble with this one.

Rapunzel fidgeted slightly. "Um, well, Gothel isn't as bad as that, of course. I don't even know how she's alive, actually, she's extremely old and was kept young only by the power of my hair. She's a witch, I think, so I'm sure she's got some nasty tricks up her sleeve. She's very manipulative, and is good at twisting people to do her will. She's not above hiring thugs to go after someone, just to go to the rescue. She's obsessive, and heartless. While she's not the embodiment of fear or anything, she has a way of getting in your head and instilling doubts and lies that seem perfectly reasonable and harmless, so don't talk to her if you can avoid it."

Hiccup sighed. "Duh-duh-duh, we're dead."

Rapunzel ignored him and looked at Merida. "I, however, am rather interested in this demon bear that a slight mention was made of." She prompted.

Merida sighed. "Well, the last one was Mor'du. He used to be a prince, the eldest. But when he became hungry for power, he got a witch's spell that would give him the strength of ten men. However, when he drank it, he turned into a bear! After the spell was complete, his human mind was lost and he turned into a killing machine. He bit of me dad's leg, and that's the king, one of our mightiest warriors. Nothing could kill Mor'du, it seemed, and he was only stopped when a giant stone pillar crushed him. If there's another bear like it, while this seems to be getting repetitive, we're in big trouble."

"Am I the only one not bringing bad news?" Hiccup complained. "I already took care of my world's problem." He added, shifting on his feet. Which, of course, unintentionally brought attention to his fake foot.

"Definitely not perfectly normal." Merida announced.

Before yet another argument could break out, North slammed open a door, making several of the occupants jump. "Come!" He boomed. "We have celebration!"

"Toldja so." Jack mumbled before following North.

## 7. Chapter 7: Backstories

### Chapter Seven

#### Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel looked at Eugene as she followed everyone else. "So, how did you actually manage to keep this a secret?" She asked him curiously. "Normally you're horrible at that."

Eugene shrugged. "The threat of doom and destruction did the trick."

Rapunzel nodded. "Alright, I'll accept that explanation." She then looked up as the scent of food - and a lot of it - hit her. "Wow." She murmured as she entered the room. North beamed at her.

"Is wonderful, is it not?" He asked proudly. "But not just for looking! Sit down, sit down!"

Rapunzel found herself ushered to the head of the table, where the other three 'special' arrivals were sitting down. She blinked at the Sandman as she passed him, he was on his fifth eggnog, chugging them like shots straight from the platter a Yeti was carrying.

As she sat down, Eugene helped her get her hair out of the way before sitting down himself. He looked at the rest of the group, appraising them.

"So." He said, propping his chin in his palm. "I wasn't there for the big introductions, and, frankly, I'm curious. What's the story for

all you guys?"

Merida looked at Eugene. "Yu want a story, give yurs first."

Rapunzel sighed. "There's not much to tell."

Eugene smiled. "But, hey, talking about myself is one of my specialties." He then turned his attention to the table. "I grew up in an orphanage reading tales of swashbuckling heroes that swam in money. For a kid with nothing, that was pretty attractive. That led to me becoming a thief. My biggest heist was stealing the crown from the palace. My two partners and I almost got caught, but I escaped by climbing into a tower hidden away from everyone else. What I didn't expect was for Blondie to be in there." He smirked at Rapunzel. "With a frying pan."

Rapunzel nodded. "Yes, well, to catch up to that point, while my mother, the queen, was pregnant with me, she fell very ill. A miracle cure was found in the form of a flower born from a drop of sunlight. Gothel had monopolized and hidden it, but despite her efforts it was found and given to my mother. When I was born, instead of being a brunette like my parents, I had long locks of blonde hair. Gothel knew what this meant, and after trying to cut my hair - which makes it turn brown and powerless - she took me and hid me in the tower, raising me as her own. I wasn't allowed to leave, and spent the next eighteen years of my life there. Gothel would tell me about how horrid and terrifying the outside world was, and, not knowing any better, I believed her. Then Eugene showed up. I convinced -"

"Forced." Eugene interrupted. "I was not willing."

"Fine...coerced Eugene into taking me to see the floating lanterns that flew into the sky every year on my birthday, my parents trying to call me home. Eugene and I went on an epic adventure, but, Gothel found out and managed to separate us, sending Eugene off to get caught and letting me believe he had betrayed me. However, instead of the guards finding Eugene like she planned, he was found by friends who then came after me. They surprised Gothel on the trail, and managed to free me and convince me of what had happened so that I went with them. And, well, I returned to my proper family." Rapunzel finished.

"Wow." Merida muttered. "Suddenly I feel rather childish. Well, ah, I'm the firstborn of the clan DunBroch. But, since I'm a princess, I had to marry. When the three lords presented the suitors, I was rash and misused the sacred games. When my mum got angry at me, I cut the precious family tapestry and ran, and found a witch's cottage. The same witch that had created Mor'du, though I didn't know it at the time. I used the necklace with the symbol of my clan to pay her for a spell that would change my mum's mind about the marriage. However, it turned her into a bear.

I found out by going back to the witch's cottage that I had two days to mend the bond torn by pride, and figured out that it was the tapestry. We made it back into the castle, where my mum used the new bond we had created to communicate through gestures that she wanted me to break the tradition and write me own story, which the lords agreed to. However, my dad found out that she was a bear without

realizing who the bear actually was, he chased her while I tried to fix the tapestry. I almost didn't make it in time, but as a bear my mum defeated Mor'du by slamming him into a stone pillar enough that it cracked and the top half crushed him. After my mum was turned back by the sunrise of the second day, I've been growing into my role as a princess."

Rapunzel blinked. "True, at first I suppose you were selfish, but now, I have a lot of respect for you, you were really brave."

She then looked at Hiccup. "Alright, working our way around, what's your story?"

Hiccup sighed. "I've always...kinda been a runt by Viking standards. I'm not strong, I'm smart, something that's not highly valued in our 'go whack them' culture. It was even worse because I'm the son of the village chief. When I finally had a chance to kill a dragon and prove myself...I just couldn't. I instead freed the dragon, and ended up secretly befriending it. I won't go into the details on that or otherwise I'd ramble on for hours. Of course, as with everything, my village found out. I was supposed to kill a Monstrous Nightmare to prove myself, but I tried to show everyone that dragons weren't mindless demons like they thought.

My father was enraged, and accidentally provoked the dragon. It attacked, and I was saved by Toothless, the dragon I befriended. Because of that I survived, but Toothless was captured and used to find the way to the Dragon's Nest. Although I was left behind, so were all the other young Vikings. I convinced them to help me tame the training dragons long enough to ride. See, what my father didn't know is that the nest was inhabited by the Red Death, a dragon easily twice the size of this room, which was commanding all the other dragons. We rode the dragons into battle to save our parents and our village, but in the end, it was just Toothless and me. We defeated the Red Death, but...it cost me my leg. I'm lucky to be alive, really."

Rapunzel let out a soft breath. "Wow."

Merida nodded. "How is it that everyone else can change their fate so easily?"

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "You still have all your limbs."

"At-ta-ta!" Rapunzel interjected before Merida could take the bait. "We still need to hear Jack's story." She explained.

"I'm personally more interested in the argument." Jack admitted. He sighed. "Yeah, you guys think you got it bad? Technically...I'm not even alive right now."

Rapunzel blinked. "I don't get it."

Jack sighed. "All the Guardians had a life before being chosen by the Man in the Moon. I was just the lucky one, as far as I know I'm the only spirit who died before becoming the incarnation of a spirit."

When he saw that he had everyone's attention at this point, he

sighed. "Well, I suppose that my death is as good a place to start as any. I had taken my sister ice-skating on a lake, even though the ice was thin. I had warned her about it, but we ended up on the thin ice anyways. She was scared, and I decided to protect her at all costs. I made the situation into a game of hopscotch so that I could get her close enough to reach with my staff." He tapped a finger on the staff leaning against the table for emphasis. "I hooked her by the waist and flung her to the thicker ice, but in doing so I fell onto where she had been moments before. I stood, and my weight was enough that the ice cracked and I fell into the lake. I don't know how long my body was in there, but the moon resurrected me and when I woke up, I had no memories, just the ability to control the winter weather and command the winds and my name: Jack Frost. I found out the hard way that everyone dismissed Jack Frost as a legend, nobody believed in me. And when they don't believe in you, people can't see or hear you and they walk right through you if you try to touch them. I spent 300 years alone, when North here learned that Pitch was up to something.

The moon told them that I was to be a Guardian, and so North tried to initiate me right off the bat. I refused, I mean, they had ignored me for 300 years, only to drag me into something that I wasn't involved in just because they needed to. Nevertheless, once I found out that Tooth had my memories in the form of my baby teeth, I was ecstatic. However, Pitch had just attacked Tooth Palace, kidnapping the tooth fairies and stealing the teeth. Mine included. North used that as an incentive to get me to help them. Life was going good, until Pitch trapped Sandy and managed to 'kill' him before we could save him. Then the Warren was attacked, meaning no Easter, and children all over the world quit believing in the Guardians. They chased me off, believing I had betrayed them, but after several rather nasty events happened a child finally believed in me, I found my center, we defeated Pitch, and he was dragged back into his lair and hasn't emerged since."

Jack sighed, leaning back. "And I am now officially out of breath, someone else can talk."

Rapunzel looked at Eugene, saddened. "Well, there you go." She told him.

Merida leaned forwards. "I think this is why we were chosen to save our worlds." She announced. "We all had pretty terrible lives, but, even if at first we were reluctant, we changed our own fates and saved the ones we love. It's because of that."

Rapunzel nodded. "The only question is, now what?"

Jack picked up a mug of hot chocolate, grinning as the beverage rapidly cooled. He downed it before it froze completely. "Now, we dig into North's feast before he gets offended."

That earned him a few laughs, and then conversation ceased as everyone tucked into the food provided. "Watch for elves." Jack informed them. "They get into everything."

Merida scoffed. "I'm sure my little brothers are worse, the wee devils."

Jack pointed at an elf lapping eggnog from Sandy's current goblet.



"You sure?"

Merida wrinkled her nose. "I'll give you that they're on par, how's that."

Rapunzel giggled when Sandy noticed and jerked the goblet away, sending the elf toppling to the floor. "It's like they don't feel pain."

Jack laughed with her. "They might not, one of their favorite pastimes is dressing one up like a Christmas Tree and putting that elf on an electric tree stand."

Merida and Hiccup frowned. "Electric?" Hiccup asked.

Jack winced and rubbed the back of his head. "Whoops. Um, it's a form of power, basically, like you know static? And lightning?"

Merida nodded. "Aye, unfortunately."

Jack let out a breath. "Well, ah, electricity is like a cross between the two, much stronger than static but not as much as lightning. Well, static and lightning are both variant forms of electricity. You'll have to figure it out soon, though, this world runs on electricity."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Great."

Jack shrugged. "Hey, trust me, it's probably not gonna be like I'll instantly adjust to your worlds, if we ever end up going there."

Merida snorted. "Yu wouldn't last a second."

Jack stuck his tongue out slightly at her. "I could say the same for you."

Astrid made a show of looking for a clock. "I think it's been more than a second."

Bunny shook his head. "Aye, but Frostbite's right. This is the Pole, not the real world. It's different out there."

Jack froze a pea and flicked it at Bunny. "And who asked you?"

Bunny's ears tilted back slightly. "Thought ya might need someone to bail ya out."

"Well, I can handle myself, Kangaroo." Jack replied with an insolent look.

"It's the accent, isn't it?" Bunny asked, ears flattening. "I'm NOT a kangaroo, mate."

"And here all this time I thought you were."

"We've been over this before. I'm a BUNNY."

Jack shrugged. "But bunnies are cute and fluffy. Oh, wait, yo-"

Fast as lightning, Bunny clamped a paw over Jack's mouth. "Don't you even think about it!" He hissed.

Jack twisted free. "Thinking." He shot back, edging away slightly and reaching for his staff. "What are you going to do about it? Throw paint on me?"

Rapunzel watched in shock as Bunny reached for a boomerang, but in an instant he was sliding backwards as ice formed under his seat. "Frost!" He yelled as the chair toppled, sending him crashing into a group of elves.

"Preemptive measures!" Jack called back, indicating the shoes that Bunny had crushed. "They can't get it through their heads that I'm not going to wear those, and I don't feel like saying hello to one of your boomerangs right now."

Rapunzel got Tooth's attention. "Are they...always like this?" She asked.

Tooth shook her head. "Normally they're worse, they're on company behavior right now."

Merida groaned. "They're the ones who are worse than my brothers."

As a raging Bunny returned to the table, cuffing Jack's head on the way back, North's laughter made them both give glares to the large Russian.

Sandy made several images over his head, and Tooth nodded. "Sandy says it's time for the visitors to get some sleep, it's been a long day." She told North.

North nodded. "Everyone finished?" When he received answers in the affirmative, he clapped his hands. "Good, then Yetis show you to rooms."

Jack got up. "Already know where mine is, see you all later." He told the room before giving a half wave and flying out. This was followed soon after by Bunny heading back to the Warren via tunnel, leaving a small flower growing out of the tile, and Sandy and Tooth flying off to do their jobs.

Yetis quickly came and escorted the other three, along with their companions, to their rooms. Rapunzel's eyes opened in amazement as she entered her room. The Yeti made a happy noise in it's odd language before hurrying off to tell North that at least one of the visitors were pleased.

Rapunzel walked farther into her room, taking in the gentle purple tone of the walls, and the pink floral designs coupled with the golden sun insignia of her country.

"So did I get it right?" Eugene asked, coming up behind her.

In reply Rapunzel turned and hugged him. "It's beautiful, Eugene."

She set Pascal down by some flowerpots that he quickly started clambering over, trying to mimic the complex colors. She told herself to remember to ask North what flowers those were, they were beautiful.

She looked outside, thrilled by how pristine the ivory snow looked, seeming to glow in the moonlight. "It's beautiful here, Eugene."

He nodded. "That it is, Blondie, but you need to sleep, it's going to be tough going from here on out."

She grinned at him. "I think I can handle it."

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Whew. For those of you that managed to trudge through the backstories, I hope there was enough humor in there to make it go down easier. The worst is behind, I promise!

## 8. Chapter 8: Guardians

### Chapter Eight

Jack Frost

Jack sighed as he landed outside his door. "Why does North expect this to actually work?" He muttered as he opened the door, a smile crossing his face despite himself when he was greeted by a blast of cold. He stepped inside, closing the door. He looked at the dark blue walls decorated with swirls of frost, some painted and some real. He leaned his staff next to his bed, pulled the windows shut, and flopped onto his bed. He then clicked off all the lights, leaving no shadows. If Pitch really was back, well, he wasn't taking any chances.

When he awoke the next morning, he sighed. Even without the influence of Pitch, his dreams hadn't been pleasant as he recalled the battle from two years ago. He flicked on a light, grabbed his staff, and opened his windows. He blasted a blank section of wall with frost, etched a message explaining that he would be out for a few minutes, and then launched himself out the window.

As he summoned the wind to catch him, he laughed happily. He then shot up, flying high into the air, a grin on his face as he saw the workshop shrink rapidly. When he deemed that he was high enough, he let himself tumble slightly before taking control again to rocket off. Alaska was nearby, and even if it was the beginning of April, well, he had never followed the rules. He let out a whoop as he flew overhead, creating massive snowstorms. "Sorry, weathermen!" He yelled before turning and flying back to the Pole. It's not like they could complain, he was just doing his job.

When he arrived, the first thing he noticed was Sandy getting ready to fly off. "Where you going?" Jack asked, plummeting out of the sky to hover nearby. Sandy donned a relieved expression, forming images to tell Jack that he had been about to look for him.

Jack shrugged, then followed Sandy back into the workshop. When he

reached everyone else, Merida looked at him irritably. "Where've you been?"

"My job." Jack replied, resting his staff on his shoulder. "Winter Spirit and all, gotta go spread winter." He added, seeing Bunny's outraged expression.

"It's after Eastah!" Bunny protested. "Where would you be dumping snow on?"

Jack shrugged. "Normally I'd reply the areas that get snow when everyone else has summer, but this time I decided to give Alaska a present."

Bunny groaned, pulling on one of his ears. "You've got to be joking."

Jack shook his head. "I only joke when it's funny."

"Everything funny to you." North grumbled good naturedly.

Jack held up his hands. "No, no! You don't get it! The only things I find funny are the funny things!" He protested.

That earned him a snort from someone, but he decided to take it at face value that he had at least made somebody sorta laugh. He then drummed his fingers on his staff as he looked at North expectantly. "So. What's the big plan?"

"That's what we're deciding." Hiccup told him. "Counting that we barely know what we're up against."

Jack sighed. "I guess that Man in Moon is being as helpful as always?" He asked bitterly.

"Jack." Tooth reprimanded him.

Jack rolled his eyes. "Right, I forgot, he actually talks to you guys. So, what'd he say?"

"Manny is making other three Guardians!" North told him cheerfully.

Jack furrowed his eyebrows. "But...they're mortals, how can they be Guardians?"

"Most spirits are just changed by Man in Moon, Jack." Tooth informed him. "That's what would happen to them."

Merida looked up at the moonlight streaming in through the open roof section. "So how exactly would this work?"

"Stand in the moonlight." Bunny told her, giving her a soft push to get her moving.

Jack leaned against his staff. "What, no dancing elves with trumpets?"

"That come later!" North informed him. "You already were immortal, humans cannot be Guardians, is not possible."

Jack watched as Merida stepped into the moonlight. The light seemed to thicken around her, and then it returned to normal. Merida stepped back, breathing a little heavier. "Wh-whoa." She muttered.

Jack reached out a hand to steady her, then yelped and recoiled. "Was your body temperature always so ridiculously high?" He asked, rubbing the hand he had touched her with. "I mean, yeah I'm cold, but I've never gotten burned touching someone before."

Merida studied her hands. "I don't feel any different." She protested.

Jack showed her his palm, which held the color of normal skin instead of it's usual pale hue. "Then explain that." He told her, before scooping a handful of snow off the window to cool his hand down, returning the heated skin to normal. He then tossed the subsequent snowball at Merida in revenge.

When Hiccup held her back, he blinked. "You are unusually warm."

"I'm telling ya, I feel fine!" Merida shouted.

Tooth flew up, making placatory gestures. "It's ok, we're not saying you're sick! It's probably just your powers becoming manifest now that you're a spirit."

Jack turned his attention to Rapunzel, who kissed Eugene before stepping into the moonlight nervously. The process was repeated, with the same shock appearing. Jack kept his distance this time, but when Eugene stepped in, he shrugged at everyone to indicate no change.

"Could be because the sheila already has powers." Bunny pointed out, gesturing to the trail of hair on the floor. "Speaking of which, you might wanna put it up, the elves are probably going to start messing with it soon."

Rapunzel nodded rapidly and began gathering up her hair. "Yeah, I'll do that."

Jack looked over at Hiccup, who was still warily standing next to a steaming Merida. Both in the fact that the snow was rapidly evaporating off her and she was still furious at him.

Astrid sighed and kicked Hiccup, gesturing towards the moonlight. Hiccup sighed and stepped into the light, squeezing his eyes shut. When the moonlight faded, he sighed. "Yeah, this does feel strange."

Jack walked over to him and poked him experimentally. "Yup. It's only frizzy that's super-heated." He observed.

"Call me that again!" Merida yelled, clenching her fists.

"Well, it's true!" Jack defended. "I mean, they do have hairbrushes where you're from, right? Not that it looks like you've ever touched one."

"Auch!" Merida exclaimed, throwing her hands up.

Jack was about to continue when Hiccup put a hand on his arm. "Come on, enough." Hiccup said, before furrowing his brows. "Well, that makes sense." He muttered.

Jack backed up quickly, his own brows crunching together in confusion. "What?"

Hiccup pointed at him. "You can control snow. You also happen to be cold to the touch."

Jack rolled his eyes, an expression he was using more and more frequently. "I'm a \_Winter\_ Spirit. Did you expect me to feel \_warm\_?"

Hiccup shrugged. "But you're way below normal temperature, like Merida's above temperature. Perhaps her becoming a spirit entails something involving heat."

Jack sighed. "Great, and we already didn't get along before hand."

Merida had watched this exchange in fascination, then nodded. "But Hiccup may be right." She pointed out, glad that the situation had a plausible explanation. "But, anyways, I'm really tired suddenly."

Jack shrugged. "Probably cause you don't have any believers."

Merida glared at him. "And how would I get those?"

Jack grinned. "I know a few kids I could introduce you to."

## 9. Chapter 9: Trouble

### Chapter Nine

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup sighed as he and Astrid followed a Yeti bringing them to Toothless. "I don't get it." He sighed. "I mean, yeah Rapunzel already had powers, but why was Merida the only one to get such a drastic change?"

Astrid shrugged. "Probably because is innate nature. Your main deal lies with your brain, so I'm not surprised that you're not suddenly throwing fireballs or nine feet tall."

Hiccup sighed. "That latter one would make me fit in a bit better at home, though."

Astrid put her arm around Hiccup. "Hey, it's fine. You'll figure it out, you always do."

Toothless butted Hiccup with his head playfully when they reached him, and Hiccup smiled. "Yeah, I guess you're right." He then adjusted the saddle, climbed on, and held his hand out to Astrid. "You coming?"

Astrid shook her head. "Can't, it'd be a little weird if people saw a random person flying through the air. Things are different, now."

Hiccup frowned. "Will everyone back home be able to see me?"

Astrid nodded. "Well, duh! They may not know you're a spirit, but they believe in you in the fact that they know a person named Hiccup exists. You're still Hiccup, you know."

Both Hiccup and Astrid looked up when they heard a shout. Merida was headed their way, looking slightly grumpy. When she reached the two, she looked up at Hiccup.

"North told me to ride with yu, Jack's takin' Rapunzel and he says that he probably couldn't handle carrying me too, especially with my increased temperature."

Hiccup smiled. "You didn't need that whole dissertation, Toothless can take two and he doesn't mind heat."

Astrid moved closer to Toothless. "C'mon, I'll boost you up." She said kindly, indicating that she wasn't about to turn into one of those paranoid jealous girlfriends.

Merida smiled, thanked Astrid, and with her help jumped into the saddle behind Hiccup. Hiccup held still for a moment to get used to the sensation of the heat, and then looked at Astrid. "Well, see you soon!" He told her before taking off, Merida letting out a startled yell behind him and tightening her grip around his middle.

Hiccup looked up when he heard Jack's laughter, to see a rather panicked looking Rapunzel with a death grip around Jack's neck. Jack adjusted so that he was carrying Rapunzel on his back, then dropped to fly alongside Toothless. "So, it seems we both need to hurry before we pass out from asphyxiation." He noted cheerfully. "Burgess is this way, c'mon!" He added, veering to the left and putting on a burst of speed. Toothless saw this as a challenge and darted after Jack.

"Jack!" Hiccup yelled. "He thinks it's a race, be careful!"

Jack laughed. "Well, then, that takes care of the speed problem!" He shot back, calling on the winds to push him even faster. "You ok back there Punzie?" He asked.

"It's Rapunzel!" She replied.

"Good, you're ok. But Rapunzel's too much of a mouthful to say all the time."

Hiccup sighed as he heard the exchange. "I realize that there's not much choice seeing as we're several thousand feet in the air, but can we please stop?"

Merida looked over the side of Toothless. "How can we even breathe up here?"

Jack flipped onto his back, using his staff to hold Rapunzel in

place, who for her part wrapped her legs around Jack's waist in a panic. "Part of the whole immortality deal, we bend the rules a little." He then flipped back over, much to the obvious relief of Rapunzel.

Hiccup yelped as Toothless suddenly followed Jack into a steep dive, a small town rapidly coming into view. Jack slowed so that he was able to talk to Hiccup. "It's a weekend, so the kids should be out playing." He informed Hiccup. "This may take a while, since they'll be out and about." Thus saying he flew off again, scanning for who Hiccup assumed to be the kids he had talked about.

"Jack!" He heard a young voice call. In response, Jack broke into a wide grin and dropped from the sky, Rapunzel's scream marking the path of descent.

Toothless let out a happy roar, and Hiccup knew that Toothless thought that this was a game, especially when the dragon started spinning on his way down. "Whoa Toothless, calm down!" Hiccup yelled, to which Toothless unhappily complied. Hiccup set Toothless down near Jack, who was getting mobbed by a group of kids. Hiccup didn't notice Merida rapidly hopping off.

"We had a snow day yesterday!" A boy with scruffy brown hair and clear brown eyes was yelling enthusiastically.

"I know, Jamie! Who do you think brought it?" Jack replied, playfully mussing Jamie's hair. "Now, I came because I want you guys to meet some friends of mine." He continued, growing slightly more subdued. He stood and gestured to Rapunzel. "You know the story of a girl who was locked in a tower and grew hair that she used to lift her mother into the tower every day?" He asked. "She's standing right there, can any of you guess her name?"

"Rapunzel!" Shrieked a tall, thin girl with short hair poking out from a hat. "No way!" Thus saying she hugged the suitably surprised Rapunzel, which was followed by gasps as the other children were quickly able to see her too.

"H-hello..." Rapunzel said, hugging the girl back.

"My name's Pippa." The girl said when she stepped back. "I always wished you were real, I should have known it!"

"Hold on, hold on!" Jack called, getting the children's attention back. "Now, this next one takes a little imagination. How many of you would like to see a dragon?" He asked.

Every boy's hand shot up, and Pippa and the other girl tentatively raised theirs as well.

Jack grinned and motioned dramatically behind him. "Whoa." A boy with glasses yelled.

Jack continued, "However because of a horrible accident, the dragon's tail was injured, and it couldn't fly! A Viking befriended it, and made it a replacement tail operated by a winch in the saddle. His name's Hiccup."

Hiccup flushed and waved as the gazes of the children zeroes in on



him as their mouths dropped open. "He's got the helmet and everything." Glasses marveled.

"So he does, Monty." Jack agreed. "One more. This one's a Scottish princess, and the only thing bigger than her voice is her hair!"

"Say that to my face yu-" Merida began to yell, before halting as she noticed all the startled gazes fixed on her. Curiously, the tiredness seemed to have abated. Perhaps Frost was right. He was still infuriating though, especially as he had just gotten her to prove his point. "Ah, hello." She continued, standing straight like nothing had happened. "I'm Merida, of the clan DunBroch."

The larger girl grinned. "I'm Cupcake." She announced, making it clear she had been the one that must have seen Merida first.

Hiccup nodded sagely as Jamie looked up at Jack. "Why'd you bring these guys here, Jack?" Jamie asked.

Jack took a deep breath before squatting down to Jamie's eye level, placing a hand on Jamie's shoulder. "There's no easy way to say this." Jack admitted. "Pitch is back."

Every child froze, their eyes widening.

"It's ok, it's ok!" Jack soothed immediately, looking around. "We're ready for him this time, that's why these three are here! They're new Guardians, but in order to fight they needed believers."

Rapunzel looked at Pippa adoringly. "Which we have now."

Jack smiled. "Yes, the first believer is always special." He commented warmly.

Monty blinked as he felt a hand on his shoulder, looking up into Hiccup's determined face. "We won't let anyone hurt you." Hiccup stated.

Jack stood up, scanning the area. "Good, looks like we're still safe." He then looked down at Jamie. "You still have that snow globe I stole for you, right?" He asked him.

Jamie nodded. "You left that part out when you gave it to me, though."

Jack shrugged. "Hey, old habits die hard, it's why I was top of the naughty list." He smiled when Jamie laughed, then grew serious. "If you get scared or if you think you're in danger, I want all of you to go through the snow globe to the Pole. You'll be safer there." He instructed. "All of you keep in contact, and until we learn more I want you to stay closer to home. If you're parents get suspicious just say that the park is too slushy. I'll lay off on the snow, so it won't be a lie. It was time for spring here anyways."

"And in the meantime, see if you can't get other kids to believe." Hiccup interjected. "If what I'm inferring is right and more believers means more power, then we'll need all the believers we can get." Monty saluted, and the other kids nodded.

"Run along home now, ya wee devils." Merida urged. "We'll scout out the area, check for threats." She added, glancing at the other three.

"We'll need to be careful, though." Jack told them once the children had left. "Pitch's lair is nearby."

Hiccup stared at Jack. "Pitch as in the 'extremely dangerous, if encountered hide and pray he does not find you', Pitch?" He clarified.

Jack shrugged. "Pretty much yeah." He answered. "We're not going to actually engage him, I'm not stupid. But we can check the area, see if anything's out of the ordinary."

"And you'll be able to tell?" Merida inquired skeptically.

"Yeah, I kinda lived here until I became a guardian, still do from time to time actually." Jack told her. "By the lake. I know this place better than the back of my hand, which really is a useless expression because can any of you close your eyes and tell me exactly what the back of your hand looks like?"

Rapunzel snorted. "Sure, it looks like the back of my hand."

Jack rolled his eyes. "Very helpful, Punzie."

Hiccup looked at Jack as he climbed back on Toothless. "Was the hand comment providing any help in the first place?" He asked.

"Oh, shut up." Jack muttered. "Come on, the lake is this way." Thus saying he turned, resting his staff on one shoulder, and walked along a road until they came to a stretch of woods. Jack looked around, shifting his grip on his staff before continuing forwards at a slightly slower pace. Hiccup felt Toothless tense slightly, and he leaned down nearer the dragon's ear.

"What's wrong?" He asked Toothless. The dragon gave a nervous rumble in response. Hiccup frowned, then straightened. "Jack?" He called. When the sprite turned, Hiccup gestured to Toothless. "Something's here, Toothless is getting nervous."

Jack frowned. "Something's scaring your dragon? Great. I don't suppose you can tell us what it is that's unsettling him?"

Hiccup shrugged. "No, but we need to be careful."

"We already are." Merida muttered, testing the draw on her bow. "Let them come."

Jack raised an eyebrow. "I wouldn't be saying that." He told her. "Not until you know what you're egging on."

Rapunzel gripped a frying pan so hard her knuckles turned white. "So, um, what is she egging on?" She asked while scanning the area around her.

Jack shrugged. "Well, if one of the dear friends we talked about is really back at full power, then seeing as we're in this area we'd probably have to worry about some equine attackers."

Rapunzel grinned. "Ah."

Merida huffed. "Well, I'm glad that you can understand, but what about those of us that speak English?"

Jack looked at her in feigned surprise. "You are speaking English? Whoa!"

Merida glared at him as she brought her bow back into half-draw. "Keep going, Frosty."

Jack gave a long-suffering sigh. "I'm not a snowman! What is with the Frosty business? I don't sing and play and dance all day before I melt away, thank you. Even if I can laugh and play just the same as you and me."

Hiccup looked at Jack in confusion. "What?"

Jack sighed. "Children's song. No, I'm not going to sing it for you. Maybe North will. But that's besides the point. Right now, what we're looking for is sand. Black sand. Okay?"

Rapunzel frowned. "It would be if we knew why."

Jack winced and looked around like he expected the shadows to attack him. "Um, well, just trust me on this, okay? And, um, if you find any, don't touch it."

Hiccup shrugged. "Fine."

Merida stared at him. "Wot? You're joking."

Hiccup shook his head. "Did it occur to you that perhaps he's the only one being wary of potentially unfriendly eavesdroppers?"

Silence reigned in the clearing for a few moments, then they split into pairs and moved off, Hiccup with Jack and Rapunzel with Merida.

"Should we have let the girls go off on their own?" Hiccup asked, looking backwards.

Jack shrugged. "May I remind you that one of the girls may well be the deadliest out of all of us at this given time? Perhaps not the most powerful, but not an easy target nevertheless."

Hiccup nodded. "So, what, are you going with me to protect me as I'm assuming the inherent logic for sending Merida with Rapunzel was?"

Jack snorted. "You happen to be riding a fire-breathing dragon. I think you can take care of yourself. It's just not a good idea to go anywhere alone, not here."

Hiccup nodded. "Fair enough."

Jack smirked, but the expression faded when he reached the pond. "What? No. It's always frozen, I..." He stopped talking as he neared

the lake. "I always keep it frozen." He finished in a barely audible murmur, staring at the dark water.

"I take it that this is something suspicious?" Hiccup asked, confused at Jack's reaction.

Jack looked back. "This is where I...well, this is where I drowned, 300 years ago. I've always kept this lake frozen so that nobody else suffered the same fate, so why..." He returned to mumbling as he started staring at the water again. "And the water was always so clear, and now it's..." His eyes widened. "Silty."

The next moment Jack had frozen a section of the water, lifted the ice out, and wrapped the blackened ice in a layer of frost. He tucked the sample into his hoodie and looked at Hiccup. "Go find the other two, I have to fix this." He ordered.

"No." Hiccup replied. "You said yourself that being alone is bad. Besides, maybe it's a trap, you're supposed to try and freeze it, and you'll get yourself drowned again or something."

Jack smiled. "I can't. Immortal, remember? And because of what I am the water will freeze before I even touch it."

Hiccup sighed. "Yet the eternally frozen pond melted completely in under a day. That's perfectly normal."

Jack stiffened slightly. "It might pose a danger to Jamie." He countered, seeming to grasp for straws.

"Then warn him about it!" Hiccup almost yelled. "This is exactly what they want, Jack!"

"And wot's the commotion about?" Hiccup heard from behind them. Both Jack and he whirled to see the two girls looking at them apprehensively.

Hiccup sighed. "Just Jack being an idiot."

Jack rolled his eyes. "I at least am trying to fix the problem!"

Rapunzel peered at the lake. "Well, if it's the sand that's the problem, don't we know someone who could help you with this?" She asked calmly.

Jack paused, then sighed. "Okay, fine, but I'm telling Jamie and his friends to stay inside until I fix this." He decided, giving a stare that challenged the others to stop him.

Merida shrugged. "I'll warn Cupcake." She decided.

Jack smirked. "Jodie. Her real name is Jodie."

Merida nodded, then climbed onto Toothless behind Hiccup as Jack smirked at Rapunzel.

"Ready to fly, Punzie?" He asked with an evil grin.

Rapunzel hesitated, then seemed to realize she had no choice because

she looped her arms around Jack's neck.

"Alright, let's fly!" Hiccup called, and the two beings capable of flight launched into the air with their passengers, heading towards Burgess.

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Finally, the plot thickens. Somewhat. This concludes the previously written material, though I will do my absolute best to keep things moving steadily.

## 10. Chapter 10: Meanwhile

\_Chapter 10\_

\_Pitch Black and Mother Gothel\_

\_Pitch glared at the Nightmare that had given him the report. "He WHAT?" Pitch roared.\_

\_"I told you to separate them." A voice came from behind him as Mother Gothel came up beside him. "Had the boy been alone then it would have worked."\_

\_"But this is Jack Frost we're dealing with!" Pitch protested. "He doesn't listen to anyone!"\_

\_Mother Gothel shrugged. "Evidently he does, because nothing happened." She pointed out with an edge to her tone. "Now, if we can stop acting like puppies chasing our tails, perhaps we can accomplish something."\_

\_Pitch let out a soft growl, turning away from the witch. "And what is it you want to do?" He inquired icily, staring at the globe that sparkled defiantly with little lights.\_

\_Mother Gothel twisted a piece of jet black hair between her fingers. "Well, seeing that you were largely unsuccessful in your last attempt to be rid of the Guardians by attacking the children, why not go for a more...head-on approach? With the new additions to the team, tearing their fragile alliance apart will be all too simple."\_

\_Pitch tightened his jaw. He should have been the one thinking of these plans. "Very well." He purred. "We will see how your plans go, for now."\_

\_Gothel laughed, an altogether unpleasant sound. "For now?" She repeated incredulously. "You should know how badly they work together, they almost got into a fight over a little melted ice!"\_

\_Pitch rolled his eyes. "That 'little melted ice' was one of the biggest psychological hits Frost could be given without directly revealing myself." Pitch snapped. "It'll fester, I assure you." He added, softening his tone. It wouldn't do to enrage the egotistic witch. "It's in his nature to be headstrong and stubborn, he'll have to come back and try to fix his precious little lake."\_

\_Mother Gothel waved a hand dismissively in the air as she walked away. "If you say so." She drawled. "Are you certain there's nobody to exploit from Dragon Boy's realm?"\_

\_Pitch smiled wolfishly. "Oh, I'm sure there is. It's impossible to become that widely regarded without creating jealousy."\_

\_"And that's where I come in." Mother Gothel purred. "A few subtle hints, and a couple suggestions, and we'll have ourselves a willing pawn."\_

\_Pitch summoned a ball of nightmare sand in his palm. "And then I make sure that a few hints and suggestions can't turn them back." He finished with a slight chuckle. "And what of the archer? Any news?"\_

\_Gothel spat. "The witch from that realm is a blasted, ambivalent do-gooder. She'll not be of any help, not directly."\_

\_Pitch nodded. "Then perhaps I need to pay a desperate someone a visit, convince them that a witch's spell is the best option to take."\_

\_Gothel nodded slowly. "Perhaps, the brute strength of a mindless animal is always a refreshing challenge for the heroes to tackle while they think they have a breather from the masterminds." She mused.\_

\_Pitch smiled. "Then what are we waiting for?" He asked, disappearing into the shadows, leaving behind only the trace of his golden eyes and a sadistic smirk before those disappeared as well.\_

\_Mother Gothel sighed. "Perhaps waiting to see what the four precious chosen will do in response would be a good idea." She muttered.\_

\_When a Nightmare whinnied somewhere in the black realm of Pitch's lair, Gothel was reminded quite uncomfortably that she was not the one in charge here. With a muffled curse at Pitch, she started looking for a route to the Dragon Boy's world.\_

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Because every good story lets the reader know what the baddies are up to while the main characters are blissfully ignorant of impending doom.

## 11. Chapter 11: What to do

### Chapter 11

#### Merida DunBroch

Merida ran a hand over the hilt of her sword nervously as the dragon landed in Burgess once more. She saw Jodie's face in a window, and the girl waved. Merida attempted to communicate through gestures that she wanted the children to meet up, and was rewarded with a flash of

comprehension from Jodie, who disappeared from the window.

"How Sandy does this all the time I'll never know." She muttered darkly, rubbing a sore spot on her arm. She then looked back, relieved to see Jack still there. Though the fact that Rapunzel seemed to have a death grip on his shoulder may have had something to do with that. "Frost." Merida called softly to him. "What do we tell the wee devils?"

Jack looked at her. "Tell them that it's not safe in the woods, and watch out for anything that's even slightly out of the ordinary. Even if it's just something as small as a normally peaceful dog that suddenly snaps at passerby, they should take that as a warning signal."

Hiccup shrugged. "Sounds logical."

Merida's attention was attracted by the children as they came out into the street, looking expectantly at Jack. Well, that was to be expected, she reasoned. After all, the children were more used to Jack protecting them than any of the other new Guardians.

"Ok." Jack started, letting out a small breath. "Pitch is definitely back, he's thawed the lake and filled it with his filthy sand." He told them, the last part coming out more as a growl than anything else. He recovered, and continued, "I want you to be especially on your guard, okay? Don't go anywhere alone, keep an eye out for anything unusual. If a bug buzzes too loud, I wanna know."

"Jack..." Merida sighed. "Too much." She cleared her throat to commandeer the attention of the children. "Let me ease the sentence a little." She proposed. "Still stay alert, and don't go alone if you can avoid it. If anything is out of the ordinary, let one of us know. As opposed to a bug, say, if a previously friendly animal starts trying to take chunks out of people, that's a pretty good sign." She decided.

"And you've got the snow globe, so don't be stingy about using it." She added, looking at Jamie. "If Pitch is out to get under our skin, you will be the first ones he goes for." She concluded.

Jodie nodded. "We'll be careful." She promised, grinning at Merida.

"Alright, back to bed with you guys now!" Rapunzel urged. The children sighed but obeyed, scampering back to their respective houses before their absences were discovered.

Merida looked at the other three. "Wot now?"

Jack's eyes hardened as he pulled out a chunk of ice twice the size of his hand. "We see what the Guardians have to say about this." He announced. "Get ready to fly."

Merida sighed. "I don't suppose you stole another snow globe?"

Jack snickered. "What's the fun in that?"

Merida sighed as she clambered back onto the dragon. "Can you keep 'im calm this time?" She practically begged Hiccup.

"Only if Jack stays calm." Hiccup replied.

"So, basically, no." Merida muttered darkly as she latched onto Hiccup with a vice grip as the dragon launched itself almost vertically into the sky. "Froooooooooooooost!" She screamed as the dragon happily followed the winter sprite through dizzying maneuvers. The only reply she received was Jack's laughter floating back to her on the breeze, coupled with Rapunzel adding her squeals and mild curses to the mix.

"Oh, no, not the spinning." Merida heard Hiccup groan.

"Nononononoooooooooo!" Rapunzel screeched, closely mirrored by Merida as Jack led Toothless through a mountain range.

"Hey, we can't go back the same way, there might be ambushes!" Jack called gleefully.

"But Pitch can track us anyways, because he can sense fear!" Merida yelled back.

Jack slowed. "Whoops. But, c'mon, that was a good fear."

Merida rolled her eyes. "Fear is fear."

Jack shrugged as he continued in a new direction at a more conservative pace. "Well, fear does keep us from doing stupid stuff. It's only bad when jerks like Pitch warp it and use it to destroy and drive people mad." He explained, doing a quick 360 to check for threats before Rapunzel could even react.

"I'm pretty sure we're safe, now, can we just go back?" Hiccup asked tiredly.

"Aye, I don't see the need for playing cat and mouse." Merida agreed.

"Just trying to keep us safe." Jack muttered as he sped up. "And you guys are the ones that told me to cut it out."

"Oh, no." Merida mumbled. "Please, no..." The next moment panic set back in as Toothless started off after Jack once more. Surprisingly, she found that it wasn't as bad as she remembered. Great, she was getting used to the irritating sprite's antics. Not good.

When they finally arrived back at the Pole, Merida bounded off the dragon. "Never again." She vowed. "I am never doing that again."

"Well, how else are you going to get around?" Jack asked innocently, having deposited Rapunzel on the ground and now hovering several feet off the ground.

Merida resisted the urge to reach for her bow and rolled her eyes. "Not all of us have the pleasure of not having to worry about falling."

Jack shrugged. "Nah, I still do, I can't fly without my staff, and



let me tell you, falling isn't pleasant, but it's survivable." He told her. "Another rule bender."

Merida sighed. "Can I just get a list of rules, or lack thereof?"

Jack wiggled his eyebrows. "Coming right up, maybe I can get North to sing the Frosty song in the meantime." He suggested hopefully.

Hiccup sighed as he approached the two bickering immortals. "I have the feeling that none of us would enjoy that, Jack." He pointed out.

Jack gave him the beginnings of a pout. "Really? It's a really popular song, though! And maybe then you'll get the point that I'm not a snowman!"

Merida groaned. "Auch, well, if you're going to pester about it, might as well get it over with!" She exclaimed.

"Yes!" Jack exulted before flying off to presumably locate North.

"That may have been a mistake." Rapunzel declared.

"You don't say." Merida retorted. "I'm freezin', let's go inside."

She was instantly greeted by Jack holding a strange box emitting words to a tune:

\_Frosty the snowman was a jolly happy soul,\_  
\_With a corncob pipe and a button nose\_  
\_And two eyes made out of coal.\_  
\_Frosty the snowman is a fairy tale, they say,\_  
\_He was made of snow but the children\_  
\_Know how he came to life one day.\_  
\_There must have been some magic in that\_  
\_Old silk hat they found.\_  
\_For when they placed it on his head\_  
\_He began to dance around.\_  
\_O, Frosty the snowman\_  
\_Was alive as he could be,\_  
\_And the children say he could laugh\_  
\_And play just the same as you and me.\_

"W-wot is that?" She yelped.

Jack rolled his eyes, hitting a button that ceased the song. "That is the song about Frosty the Snowman. See what I mean?"

Merida shook her head, pointing at the box. "No, that!"

Jack looked at the device. "Oh, this? This is a radio!" He explained, holding it out for inspection. "It's one of the more popular human devices made with electricity, basically it can either detect special sound waves and then translate them into audible sound, or you put something called a CD in and it reads the information to translate that into sound." He finished proudly. "This one's pretty old, though."

The winter sprite's attention was quickly diverted by the arrival of the other Guardians.

"Jack, how many times must I tell you to not take things without permission?" North scolded, a small smile on his face when he realized which song had been played.

"Guys, guys, listen!" Jack urged, pulling out the piece of ice. "Pitch messed with my lake!" He set the ice on a table, letting the protective layer of frost melt away to allow the Guardians to see the sickly black sand that polluted the ice of his lake.

"Why the lake, though?" Tooth asked, clearly confused.

"Well, it was a right trouble he gave us when he found out." Merida butted in. "That just might have sumthin' to do with it."

Jack looked pleadingly at Sandy, ignoring Merida. Sandy shrugged, placing a small hand on the ice. Jack cheered when there was a golden flash and the blackness left the ice.

Merida blocked Jack before he could drag Sandy out the door. "We've got other things to do." She reminded him.

She saw Jack suppress a nasty look as he turned away, answering questions the Guardians raised. \_It's just a lake!\_ She thought to herself. \_Wot's the big deal?\_

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>Well, the plot finally thickens, things will get moving soon, I promise. I hate waiting as much as anyone else does, so all this dancing around will cease soon, very soon.<p>

## 12. Chapter 12: Unwanted Visit

### Chapter 12

Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel sighed lightly as she stared at the globe, totally zoned out. She had never imagined anything like this happening in her wildest dreams, and so, for once, she was at an utter loss for an idea of what to do. She blinked out of her reverie when the fact that her name was being called finally registered.

She turned to see an irate Bunny looking down at her. "Do ya know where Frostbite got to?" He asked irritably.

Rapunzel shook her head. "No. Why?"

"Sandy's gone too." Tooth supplied. "They probably went to fix the lake, and with Sandy there he'll be fine."

Rapunzel sighed. "How long have you known about this?"

Tooth shrugged. "They left pretty much immediately after the meeting, so, ah, a few hours?" She mused, ruffling her feathers slightly against a cold breeze.

"Ancient history, Tooth." Jack told her as he landed, Sandy close behind. "Pond has been cleansed and frozen, and there are signs that Pitch has left this dimension of the nekis or whatever." He added.

"Nexus?" Rapunzel supplied. "Do you ever listen?"

"Is that really a question you need to ask?" Jack shot back. "But, anyways, we don't know for sure where he went, and Sandy's worried." He noticed Sandy giving him a look and he shrugged. "And I guess I'm a little curious."

Sandy rolled his eyes and floated off to go find North, along with the other two new Guardians. Once he had left, Bunny glared at Jack.

"And ya couldn't tell us ya were leavin'?" He demanded.

Jack shrugged. "Last time I checked I wasn't a prisoner here, I can leave for a while if I want." He defended himself, crossing his arms.

Rapunzel sighed. "Can we just wait for a minute? We need to figure out where this Pitch guy went, he's probably up to something."

"Yes, I can feel it! In my belly!" North agreed as he joined them. "Pitch is probably in one of two places, Berk or DunBroch."

Merida jerked her head up as she entered the room upon the mention of her kingdom. "What? Yu mean...my family!"

North shook his head. "Not likely, he may be searching for allies."

Jack tilted his head. "He seemed more the high-and-mighty guy that works alone."

"Cause it worked real well last time." Bunny pointed out.

Rapunzel nodded. "He's got Gothel from my kingdom, so why mess with there, and obviously he wouldn't be looking for backup here. Now, the only problem is to find out which of the two places would be better suited to him."

Merida tapped her foot in annoyance. "Knowing my kingdom, he may have

gone there. We're firm believers in magic, and heavy on superstition too."

North nodded. "Very well, will be test. Send you four to DunBroch, see how you do!"

Jack stared. "North, tell me you're kidding. Please."

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. "Is working with us really that much of a disaster?" She asked.

Jack gave her a slight look before fixing his gaze on Merida. "Tell me it's winter there. At least give me that."

Merida sighed. "The seasons run the same there as here, Frost. We're slowly approachin' springtime, though it's still pretty cold due to the fact that we're right next to the sea." She told him.

Jack nodded. "I can handle that. So, when do we head out?"

North tossed him a snow globe, which Jack barely caught. "Now." He told Jack before muttering something to another snow globe and throwing it on the ground.

"Oh!" Rapunzel gasped. "The portal from earlier!"

Jack looked at her. "You actually went through the portal voluntarily?" He demanded.

Rapunzel nodded confusedly. "Why, is that not normal?"

Jack glared at North. "His great idea was stuffing me in a sack and tossing me through the portal. Not fun."

Hiccup snickered, then grew serious as a thought struck him. "But how will Toothle-" He started to ask, but was interrupted by the yelling of several Yetis accompanied by Toothless basically tackling the four youngest Guardians through the portal, accompanied by a large Clydesdale.

When they landed, Rapunzel immediately wished she was wearing something a bit warmer than the thin dress she had on at the moment. "I th-thought you said it was spring!" She accused Merida, who was blissfully stroking the muzzle of the Clydesdale.

"Aye, and so it is!" Merida defended. "I did say it would be cold!"

Jack ignored the two squabbling females as he lifted up into the air to scan the surrounding area. "I'm not seeing anything out of the ordinary like entire forests teeming with Nightmares." He reported when he came back down. "Not that I'm an expert."

Merida sighed and swung up into her saddle. "There's a place I want to check, follow me." She ordered before galloping off.

Rapunzel bit back a squeal as she felt herself lifted by the back of her collar by an ice cold hand. "Jack, stop!" She begged.

"You wanna get left behind?" Jack asked, deftly switching arms to get

a better hold on her. "Don't worry, I'm stronger than I look. Try just looking at the scenery, this has gotta be new for you." Jack suggested.

Rapunzel sighed, looking down to see Hiccup and Toothless engaged in a fierce race with Merida and her horse. She then gasped as a ring of mystic looking stones came into view, one broken and laying across the field. "Amazing." She murmured.

Jack landed lightly beside the stone in time for Merida to swing out of the saddle just outside the stones, walking in alone. "Angus throws me every time I try to ride him in here." She explained as Hiccup also approached on foot.

"Maybe they're picking up on something that we're not?" Rapunzel offered. "Animals have better senses than we do."

Merida shrugged. "Or he's just a big baby. Either way, we've got a gaffy old witch to visit." She announced unenthusiastically. "The one that turned me mum into a bear. If Pitch wants an ally, he'd start with her."

Jack nodded. "Fair enough. Lead the way."

Merida nodded, and as soon as she took a step a trail of blue spirits appeared, beckoning the four.

"Will-o-the-wisps?" Rapunzel asked, startled. "The books I read said that the Will-o-the-wisp is an ancient creature that would lead men off the paths and to their dooms."

Merida shrugged. "These wisps are a bit different. I think. They lead yu to yur fate." She explained in a slightly hushed tone as they reached the first wisp, which promptly dissipated into glowing blue smoke before vanishing entirely.

"Why would they lead you to your feet, I would hope you already know where they are." Jack inquired, conjuring up small flurries of snowflakes as he walked.

"Honestly?" Merida groaned.

"And I thought Bunny's accent was bad!" Jack added before Merida could hush him.

Rapunzel sighed. "Is it a good idea to visit this witch?" She inquired, trying for a subject change. "Last time I checked, witches were dangerous."

Merida shrugged. "She won't do anything until yu pay her, perhaps she's already taken care of Pitch for being an annoying busybody."

"How?" Rapunzel wondered.

"Well, she can animate objects. Like, a broom and knives and things like that." Merida explained. "As well as cast spells."

"Wouldn't breathing life into inanimate objects count as a spell?" Hiccup pointed out.

Merida sighed. "Anyways." She nearly growled as the last wisp vanished. "We're here."

As the group approached the small cottage, Rapunzel noted with wonder that it seemed to have been quite old, dug into the side of a hill, but it looked relatively new. Merida opened the door, letting herself and the other three in.

"Well, if it isn't that red-haired girl!" A stooped old woman cackled as she neared the group. "Come for more carvings?"

Merida shook her head. "No, information."

The witch tapped her considerable nose. "Ah, about that rough-mannered, surly grey fellow with the strange eyes that was here." She guessed. "He was here right after a sharp-mannered young lady with black hair almost as bushy as yours, Princess."

Rapunzel gasped. "Gothel. She really is alive."

The witch sighed, then noticed that a broom was still sweeping the floor. She hurriedly clicked her fingers, causing the broom to drop as if shot.

"Yep, check animation of objects off the list." Jack muttered. "Very nice."

The witch peered suspiciously at Jack. "You're not wanting a spell, are you?"

Jack gave a snort of amusement. "Nah, I'm already nice and magicked, thank you." He replied. "Did the man you talked about earlier give any hint to his intentions?"

The witch hummed. "He did say I could be expecting a big customer soon."

Merida's face paled. "He's tryin' to make another demon bear." She mumbled.

Hiccup's face set into determined lines. "We won't let him." He vowed.

Merida looked at the witch. "Can we pa-"

The witch shook her head. "That's bribery, and a sale is a sale! You took care of Mor'du, you can take care of another one if someone is foolhardy enough to come here."

"Gaffy old witch, handing out gammy spells! That's a human life yu'd be ruinin'!" Merida practically screamed.

Rapunzel put a hand on Merida's shoulder. "Ultimately, it's still their decision." She pointed out. "Just like you made the decision with your mother, and then made another decision to save the kingdom."

Merida huffed angrily. "Well, let's find Pitch then, and send him to meet Mor'du!"

Jack raised his staff. "That's a decision I can support." He decided.

The witch waved cheerily as the foursome left her cottage. "Good luck!" She called merrily, pretending not to notice Merida's glare when the door slammed shut.

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Yep, pick on Merida time this chapter. As you may guess, there'll be a lovely confrontation next chapter, so it's finally time to get the ball rolling!

### 13. Chapter 13: Confrontation

#### Chapter 13

Jack Frost

Jack looked back at Merida when they rejoined the animals at the strange stone ring. "So, any idea who would be enough of an idiot to listen to Pitch?" He asked her as they entered the shadowy forest. "And is it normal for it to be this dark?"

Merida rolled her eyes, but whatever comment she had been about to make was cut off by a sinister chuckle.

"Idiot? Well, Jack, you're being awfully hard on yourself." Pitch teased, stepping out from behind a tree. "I seem to remember that yo-"

Jack cut off his monologue with a furious shout and a stream of ice headed straight for Pitch's face. Pitch gave one of his signature laughs as he disappeared back into the shadows.

"But what's this, Frost? Finally found yourself some new friends besides those wierdos?" Pitch continued, now standing on a branch just above their heads.

"I wouldn't say we're friends." Merida pointed out as she loosed an arrow at Pitch. She heard a feral snarl, and a black animal with glowing gold eyes appeared out of nowhere, snapping her arrow before it could reach Pitch. When the animal landed, they could see that it was a wolf.

"Really, Pitch?" Jack pouted. "But that takes away all the dramatic irony!"

"Silence!" Pitch snarled as hordes of Nightmares, or perhaps Nightwolves, began appearing in a circle around them.

Jack pretended to yawn as they charged, then slammed the butt of his staff into the ground, creating a blast of wind that knocked all the Nightmares back, as well as creating a thick layer of frost on the ground. Jack then pointed his staff at Pitch. "I'm stronger now, you know." Jack told Pitch.

Pitch smiled horribly. "But you're forgetting, people believe in me

here! So now, what's more powerful? It's FEAR." With that he sent a burst of nightmare sand rocketing towards Jack, who effortlessly dodged with the help of the wind.

When he landed, he risked a glare at the other three. "A little backup would be nice..." He complained before ducking to avoid another blast.

He almost snickered when he saw Rapunzel start taking out Nightmares with a frying pan, but he had to focus on Pitch. He charged forwards, but was stalled by Hiccup's command, "DUCK!"

Jack realised that could only mean one thing coming from Hiccup and dove, flattening himself to the ground. He heard a high-pitched whistle, then something glowing blue shot overhead to explode dramatically where Pitch had been.

Silence reigned in the clearing, then Jack saw Pitch rise up behind Rapunzel. "Punzie!" He shouted, bringing his staff up. However quick he was, Merida was faster, and Pitch was sent staggering back, an arrow protruding from his shoulder.

To their surprise, Pitch smirked. "I did say I was stronger." He chided before dissolving into black sand.

"It was a fake!" Hiccup yelled as Toothless took to the sky once more.

"Backs together!" Merida commanded. Jack held his hands up.

"That'll work for two people, but with three there'd be an open invitation for Pitch to get behind all of us simultaneously. You keep Punzie safe, and I can just fly." He pointed out, jumping up and having the winds carry him.

He saw Merida roll her eyes before backing up against Rapunzel. They were safe, and he could see the shape of Hiccup circling overhead. Now, where was...

Jack wasn't sure if it was a noise or just pure instinct, but something made him look to his right. "Oh, hello." He muttered before having the winds release him from their supportive grip, wincing as the sand arrow hissed by inches overhead. He landed lightly and sent ice blasting at the source of the arrow. He heard a chuckle from behind him and whirled, lashing out with his staff.

Pitch obviously hadn't been expecting such a violent response and had to hastily summon his sand scythe to block the strike. "Not bad, Jack, not bad." He then had to retreat again as Merida sent another arrow at him.

Jack smirked. "Not fun, having someone being able to fight back with the same modus operandi, is it?" He asked triumphantly.

Pitch glared at him. "Perhaps there won't be, for long." He threatened, disappearing once more. Jack's eyes widened, and his gaze swung towards Merida and Rapunzel. He saw Pitch take aim, but he wasn't about to repeat what had happened to Sandy. He flicked his staff out, causing a wall of ice to shoot up between Merida and Pitch right as the arrow was fired.



Before Pitch could register the unwelcome turn of events, Jack was on him, swinging his staff and causing huge flurries of snow and wind to buffet Pitch. Jack could distantly hear the other three gaining ground on the Nightmares, but he was focused solely on not making the same mistake again. Pitch wouldn't escape this time.

As if sensing his thoughts, Pitch grinned. "You can't kill fear, Jack." He taunted, suddenly standing still. "And you really need to learn how not to get led along..."

Jack furrowed his eyebrows, then noticed that it was silent. He looked around, realising that Pitch had taken advantage of his nearly maddened rush to separate him from the group. "You gotta be kidding me..." He groaned, looking back to Pitch right as he disappeared.

Jack immediately flew high up into the air, scanning for any sign of Pitch. His heart was going twice the normal rate, and he swallowed thickly as unwelcome memories came pouring back. Rotten bed, lair, memories, taunting, chased away, battle, Baby Tooth, pain so much pain...

He shook his head violently. "No!" He yelled at himself. He heard Pitch chuckle, and whirled to see him standing nonchalantly on a cloud of nightmare sand.

"Bad memories?" Pitch inquired sympathetically.

"And I WONDER WHY?" Jack screamed, blasting a huge bolt of ice at Pitch. Pitch sent a wave of nightmare sand to intercept, laughing like a madman.

"You're scared, Jack!" Pitch yelled. "Scared of losing, scared of failing them again, scared of them not accepting you!" He continued. "Seems like you haven't changed."

Jack thought he heard someone call his voice, but he ignored it. "Shut up, shut up!" He yelled, charging Pitch. The next moment he was blindsided by a Nightmare, sharp teeth digging painfully into his shoulder. "GET OFF!" Jack ordered, stabbing it with his staff.

He dropped slightly when the Nightmare dissipated back into sand, but before he had recovered he saw black and it felt like a hand snatched him up, slamming him against a tree painfully before releasing him. Jack saw stars as he started to fall, but was grabbed once more and swept into the air.

Right as he was about to defend himself, he noticed the wing of a dragon above him.

"Whatever happened to not engaging him alone?" Hiccup called down to him.

"Shut up and let me go, I'm fine." Jack groaned. "Being carrying by a fire-breathing dragon probably isn't healthy for a winter spirit, you know."

Toothless released Jack, who steadied himself. He looked up, noticing Pitch was gone. "What? Grah!" He growled in annoyance, searching for

his adversary.

Hiccup sighed. "Let's check back with the girls, make sure they're ok."

Jack sighed, feeling his back start to bruise. "Yeah, this wasn't very successful."

He landed harder than normal when the two arrived at the clearing, which was still littered with sand. "You two okay?" He asked.

Rapunzel raised an eyebrow at him. "Are you okay?" She countered, taking in his battered appearance.

Jack sighed. "I'd be better if I knew where Pitch had got to." He admitted. "He led me away from you guys and then disappeared when Hiccup showed up."

"Oh, so now it's my fault." Hiccup muttered.

Jack held his hands up. "No, no, and you saved me from a nasty fall. I'm just saying that when backup arrived he either decided to let us regroup before attacking or he went back to doing whatever it is he was going to do."

Merida looked at Jack. "Which do you think?"

Jack sighed. "He probably thinks that we'll still be stuck here waiting for another attack, and I wouldn't put it past him to run from a fight because he had plans."

Merida made a scorning sound in her throat. "So he's one of those cowards, then."

Jack nodded and turned to go, but Rapunzel grabbed him by the shoulder. Jack hissed in pain as the motion set his shoulder and back throbbing.

"Oh no." Rapunzel gasped. "You're hurt! Sit down!"

Jack looked at Rapunzel in confusion as she practically forced him to sit. "Wh-what?"

"Where are you hurt?" She demanded, reaching up to undo the tie that had been keeping her hair in a thick braid.

"My back." Jack replied in confusion.

"Right, then, you'll need to take your shirt off." Rapunzel ordered in a no-nonsense tone, hair now falling loose around her shoulders and pooling around her feet.

Before Jack could protest Merida and Hiccup had grabbed his sleeves and yanked the hoodie off. "Trust her, Jack, you'll feel better." Merida promised.

Jack flinched when Rapunzel laid her hair across his back. "Hey, tender there." He protested.

"Sorry..." Rapunzel apologized. "It won't be much longer now." She then took a deep breath and began to sing.

\_Flower, gleam and glow\_  
\_Let your power shine\_  
\_Make the clock reverse\_  
\_Bring back what once was mine\_  
\_Heal what has been hurt\_  
\_Change the fate's design\_  
\_Save what has been lost\_  
\_Bring back what once was mine,\_  
\_what once was mine"\_

Jack watched in awe as her hair took on a soft golden glow as she sang before receding back to blonde when the incantation ended. He felt her pull her hair away before realising that the pain was gone. "Whoa!" He exclaimed, trying to see his back. "What, what..."

"I have magic hair that glows when I sing." Rapunzel told him. "It can heal anything, bu-"

Merida cleared her throat. "Given the environment we're in, I suggest yu don't go blabbin' yur weakness to the open air." She warned.

Jack hurriedly pulled his hoodie back on. "So, do we know who Pitch will try to target?"

Merida sighed and shook her head. "It could be anyone."

"Wonderful!" Jack exclaimed. "Why did we come here?"

"To see if the witch would help us!" Merida reminded him in exasperation.

Hiccup looked at Jack. "I don't see how we can stop this, we should go back to the Pole and prepare for one heck of a bear fight." He proposed.

Jack looked over at Merida. "You said that the soul was released once the bear is defeated, right? So, really, it's not like we're sentencing a soul to wander forever if we give up." He reasoned.

Merida clenched her bow so hard her knuckles turned bone white. "Aye." She agreed through clenched teeth. "But Pitch 'ad be'er 'ope 'e doesn't find 'imself on the receivin' end of one of mah arrohs." She added, agitation making her accent stronger.

Jack nodded slowly. "Kay...didn't really catch all that, but Pitch is walking a thinner line now. Good to know." He then fished the snow globe out of his pocket, and miraculously it was still intact. "The North Pole." He commanded it, then threw it against a tree.

The four Guardians moved through the portal, knowing that they had some rather poor news to bring back to the senior Guardians.

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Hooray, fight scene! Hope you guys enjoyed it, and thank you shandaws99 for the awesome suggestion about the Nightmares new form!

## 14. Chapter 14: Bravery

### Chapter 14

Merida DunBroch

Merida looked around as the subdued foursome emerged from the portal. Immediately North noticed something off and hurried over.

"You are not hurt?" He demanded in concern.

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. "I'm standing right here. We're all fine."

Merida nodded, still miffed about her failure. "Aye, but some poor person won't be." She announced darkly. "We \_failed\_."

To her surprise, she was enveloped in an embrace from Tooth. "It's alright." The fairy told her kindly. "You're new to this, you're lucky that you're okay."

"Luck had nothing to do with it." Hiccup muttered.

Merida shook her head as Tooth released her. "Actually, the fact that someone's goin' ta become a bear is a blessin' and a curse. Sure, we hafta fight it eventually, but because of that Pitch regarded us as a smaller threat and decided to leave us alone after he figured out that we weren't as easily beaten as he expected."

Tooth gasped. "Pitch? You were attacked by Pitch?"

"Yeah! And his Nightmares aren't horses anymore, they were wolves!" Jack complained. "It totally ruins the irony of their existence!"

"Still hung up on that?" Rapunzel asked, gesturing slightly with the frying pan.

Jack edged away from her. "Yes, actually, and watch it with that thing."

Merida cleared her throat. "The main question is where Gothel is." She pointed out. "If we can't stop Pitch, perhaps we can stop her."

Bunny shook his head. "I'm afraid we can't let you, mate. Her powers are unknown, as is her current location. It'd be suicide to go on a goose chase after her."

Merida threw her hands up in the air. "Then wot's the point of bein' a Guardian?" She demanded. "Because evidently we do absolutely nothing!"

Jack smirked. "Au contraire. We train you two," He suggested, pointing at Hiccup and Merida, "and find out what your powers are. Then, we go out into the world, get believers, make sure there's nothing endangering the children, and find your guys's centers."

Merida raised an incredulous eyebrow. "Centers."

Jack nodded. "Yeah, like, mine is Fun, North's is Wonder, Kangaroo's is Hope, Tooth's is Memories, and Sandy's is Dreams." He explained. "We need to find yours, because it's what you protect in children, what makes you strong."

"Sounds like a plan." Hiccup agreed.

"Well, thought, I'd never say this, but it won't be fun." Jack warned. "For me to find my center it took me getting my staff broken, seeing the memory of when I died saving my sister, finally getting my first believer, and then having that believer threatened. I realised my center when I was telling him not to be scared."

Merida sighed. "Well, we've all had our traumatic experiences. Maybe we can get hints from those." She suggested.

Rapunzel's eyes lit up. "Oh! Remember what I told you! I thought you were brave! Maybe that's your center, Bravery!" She exclaimed.

Jack nodded. "And Hiccup's could be Friendship, I mean, it takes some talent to befriend a dragon well enough that said dragon is willing to fight to the death for you."

Hiccup nodded. "And, well, Rapunzel, I've never seen it, but Eugene told me at length about your extensively painted tower. Perhaps yours is Creativity."

Jack sighed. "Well, that makes life easier. Now we just have to test our theories somehow."

Merida rolled her eyes. "And how would that happen?"

Jack's eyes sparkled. "We coax out your powers, of course." He then pointed at Hiccup. "You'll be training with the fireproof dragon, though, just in case." He added rapidly.

Merida nodded. "Fair enough, wouldn't want to melt yu." She replied glibly.

Bunny's laughter rewarded her small joke, which Merida realized was his revenge for the latest Kangaroo jibe.

"Anyways." Jack continued. "We already know what Punzie can do, so if frizzy here takes on the dragon I'll see if I can't figure out what Hiccup's fancy powers are."

Rapunzel had to hold Merida back. "I take it back, get over here so I can turn yu into a puddle!" Merida snapped.

Jack waved lazily as he walked away. "Save the rage for the dragon, you may need it."

Merida huffed, absolutely enraged, but followed Toothless outside.

"Ach, it's freezin'!" Bunny complained.

"Then don't follow." Merida shot back. For some reason she wasn't affected, at least no more than any other chilled autumn day. Her powers, perhaps. "Heat, brave, heat, brave..." She chanted over and over to herself, desperately trying to come up with what she could do.

She pulled out her sword and swung it in front of her irritably, then paused when she noticed the blade wasn't a normal color. She stared as the blade slowly heated up to a red-hot temperature, snowflakes sizzling against it as she swung it. No heat reached her, and when she dropped the sword, it immediately reverted to a normal sword.

She picked it back up, with no change. She glared at it, and it immediately gave off a dull glow. "Honestly?" She muttered. "The angrier I am, the hotter the heat I channel is?"

Bunny shrugged. "Makes sense, anger can often catalyze the strongest valor."

"Aye, don't I know it." Merida muttered, remembering her dad facing down Mor'du, because of nothing but a grudge. "But there's brave, and then there's reckless."

Bunny patted her shoulder. "Hence why you're here, sheila. This way kids have the courage to face their fears, but aren't stupid enough to do something that'll get the little anklebittah's killed."

Merida nodded as she sheathed her sword, pulling out an arrow at the same time. "But what if I'm not angry?" She asked.

"Well, Frost isn't always havin' fun when he's conjurin' up his bloody snow, ask him."

Merida wrinkled her nose in distaste, and the arrowhead mirrored her reaction by glowing red as well.

Bunny snickered. "Frost get on your bad side too?"

Merida didn't answer, instead nocking the glowing arrow to her bow, noticing with pleasure that even when the arrowhead rested against her bow and near her hand, neither of the latter were burned. She then released the shot, watching as even the frigid air of the Pole wasn't enough to cool the arrow. "So, somehow my arrohs are different from my sword." She observed. Toothless looked at her, then back at where the arrow had struck.

Merida turned her attention back in time to see the arrow fly through its third piece of metal before lodging in its fourth. "Well, that's

useful." She muttered. She glanced at Bunny. "Well, if you can still move, let's go back inside."

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Yayyyyyyyy Merida had fancy powers now. I know that I chose an unconventional center for Hiccup, I think it fits him better, and face it, friendship is important to kids and it's a quality I saw in Hiccup.

\*\*Speaking of Hiccup. I have NO idea what I want his powers to be. I've started swinging between something like communicating with animals or being able to read minds but let's face it, those are cliché to the point of being \*\*\*\*\_ad nauseum\_\*\*\*\*. Or however that's spelled.\*\*\*\* So, anyways, review or PM me and let me know what YOU think Hiccup's powers should be, since I'm obviously not creative enough this late at night to think properly.\*\*

## 15. Chapter 15: Inventing Friendship

### Chapter 15

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup rubbed his hands nervously when Jack stopped in front of a walkway leading to the Yeti Village. "So, why are we outside?" Hiccup inquired.

Jack leaned against his staff. "I told you, didn't I? My powers are suited for the outdoors. From what I've heard, the place you come from is pretty outdoorsy as well. I'm merely trying to increase the chances of you figuring out what you can do."

Hiccup nodded slowly. "So, um, do I need to figure out a conduit for..."

Jack shook his head. "Not likely, I mean, my circumstances are special. I saved my sister's life with this staff, and in turn was resurrected as a Guardian. As such, the staff is part of why I'm a Guardian, thus, part of my powers as a Guardian."

Hiccup nodded. "But...no weapons at all necessary?"

Jack gave Hiccup a look. "Tell Sandy that he needs some solid weapons. Go ahead."

Hiccup swallowed. "I'd prefer to stay conscious." He then looked down at his hands.

Jack sighed. "I swear, start thinking before I toss you off a cliff."

Hiccup looked up, panicked. "You wouldn't."

Jack shrugged. "Hey, I might decide to catch you, and it would certainly-"

"Put me into a panic attack thus rendering me unable to think." Hiccup finished.

Jack looked at him. "So you're telling me that you've never fallen off Toothless when you were first learning to ride him." He asked, stating the question flatly.

"Well, of course I did." Hiccup admitted.

Jack whacked Hiccup on the head with his staff, frosting Hiccup's hair. "You took a risk, and it worked out. You have a reputation for being inventive. Prove it."

Hiccup sighed. "Be inventive with what?" He pointed out.

Jack spread his arms out. "You think that the Yetis, the creatures in charge of making all the toys Santa delivers, don't have spare parts lying around?" He asked, walking backwards over the walkway.

Hiccup followed a tad reluctantly. "But how would Friendship involve something like inventing?" He asked for the sake of continuing the argument.

Jack shrugged. "You're the genius, apparently. You tell me."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "This is not helping." He then dodged another strike from the staff.

"Well, at least you learn quickly." Jack muttered cheerfully.

"So, what, how does ice relate to fun?" Hiccup inquired.

Jack grinned. "Well, I can create snowflakes that make people see the fun in things, or turn everyday snow into fun snow like that. And then of course there's sledding, snowball fights, snow days, the list goes on."

Hiccup nodded. "So sometimes it's the end product that signifies the relationship."

Jack patted him on the shoulder. "There ya go, keep thinking."

Hiccup rubbed his head. "Was hitting me really necessary?"

Jack grinned. "What do you think?"

Whatever retort Hiccup had prepared was interrupted by Rapunzel dashing out. "North wants to see Hiccup!" She announced, slightly out of breath.

Jack feigned hurt. "What? He doesn't trust me as a suitable teacher?"

Hiccup sighed. "Wonder why." He teased Jack before following Rapunzel back in.

As he walked through the Pole, Hiccup looked at Rapunzel. "So, why does North want to see me?" He asked.

Rapunzel shrugged. "Dunno, he just suddenly shouted 'idea' and nearly decapitated Bunny with a sword before calming down enough to tell



someone to get you. I was closest to the door, so I went."

Hiccup sighed. "Well isn't that just great. And why did he try to kill Bunny?"

"He didn't! He was holding his sword for some reason, and he was gesturing with it."

Hiccup sighed. "Sounds like a few Vikings I know."

"Well then, I hope you're ready to handle this." Rapunzel warned before pushing open the door.

"Ah, Hiccup, m'boy! There you are!" North bellowed. "Come, walk with me! I have idea!"

"So I've heard." Hiccup mumbled under his breath as he changed direction to keep up with North. "So what is this wonderful idea?"

"You grew up with blacksmith, no? Maybe your power has something to do with that!"

"It's possible, I suppose, Jack was starting to hint in that direction too." Hiccup mused. "But I get how toys are related to Wonder and eggs are related to Hope and snow is related to Fun. How is inventing related to friendship?"

North laughed. "Center not always directly related to power! You think that flying is related to Memories?"

Hiccup sighed. "But then..."

"But! Tooth still has abilities that make her Guardian of Memories!" North continued.

"North! I get it. You're excited. My ears aren't. Normal volume please." Hiccup begged.

North cleared his throat uncomfortably. "Ah, yes. As I was saying, you have abilities that make you Guardian of Friendship. But Friendship not necessarily your power. Not everything about snow is fun and games. Not everything about Wonder is just toys." He then led Hiccup into his office where he personally made toys himself.

Hiccup picked up a toy and looked at it quizzically.

"Oh! Ah, that one not work properly." North admitted.

Hiccup frowned at it, and felt his fingers tingle as something seemed to shift in the device. He set it down and the toy promptly began moving across the table.

Hiccup stared down at his hands. "I...I can fix things by touching them." He murmured.

He then almost fell over as North patted him on back. "Just as sometimes we must fix a friendship, yes?"

Hiccup nodded. "I wonder, can I..." He picked up a sawed-off rod of

metal and concentrated, focusing on an image of a Viking short sword. He felt the telltale tingle again, and heard North's excited shout. Hiccup was aware of the door being thrown open, but he kept his focus on the sword. When the tingles subsided, he looked down at the rudimentary blade he was holding.

"Not bad, first try." Jack commented, perched on top of his staff so he could see over the other spirits watching. "My first time controlling the wind ended up with me saying hello to a tree branch."

Hiccup picked up a block of wood, but something felt different about it. Like he couldn't see the possibilities in it as he had the metal. "Looks like it only works on metal, though."

"Makes sense, yu were a blacksmith's apprentice." Merida commented.

Hiccup looked over at her. "Hey, have you figured out your..."

He was answered when Merida unsheathed her sword. "Sorry, but yu'll hafta make me angry, I can't do this without bein' angry yet."

"Then what's the point, frizzy?" Jack asked insolently.

"I wasn't talking to yu, Frost!" Merida snapped, and Hiccup rapidly backed up as her sword instantly turned red-hot.

"You said to make you angry..." Jack defended himself, eyeing the glowing blade.

"Guys, enough." Hiccup sighed. To his surprise, the two combatants gave him deadly stares but subsided.

North let out a hearty chuckle. "And there is a skill that denotes Friendship!" He announced. "I say we celebrate with some cookies!"

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You guys have no idea how much I was at war with myself to figure out Hiccup's power. I am eternally grateful to to bug349, BabyBird101, and shandaws99 for their suggestions and advice, I would still be stuck if not for them! And, of course, what better way to end chapter 15 than with North's stomach striking again.

## 16. Chapter 16: Plans

### Chapter 16

#### Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel hummed to herself as she followed a Yeti into the workshop. She had woken up earlier than most, a result of being a princess with responsibilities no doubt. Fortunately, North had been up as well and had been easily swayed to allow her to aid the Yetis in painting toys. One of the Yetis gave her a speculative glance as it handed her a fresh brush. Rapunzel took it, grabbed a palette and quickly filled it with assorted colors of paint.

She heard a pleasantly surprised rumble from the Yeti as she began painting a dollhouse with even, practiced strokes. She smiled. Eighteen years in a tower tends to allow for lots of practice. She was soon keeping pace with several Yetis, reveling in being able to paint freely once more. She began subconsciously adding little sun details and floral designs, but seeing as it just enhanced the houses the Yetis let it slide. Not that she would understand if they tried to tell her anyways.

Rapunzel looked up when she heard her name called, and saw Eugene waving to her. She put the brush down and waved back, before handing the palette off to a Yeti and making her way over to Eugene. "Yes?"

Eugene shrugged. "I haven't seen much of you since we got here, I wanted to make sure you were okay." He replied. "Oh, you got paint..." He told her, gesturing to the front of her dress with a slight wince.

Rapunzel looked down in alarm, then blinked when Eugene tapped her underneath the chin.

"Gotcha." Eugene snickered.

Rapunzel sighed. "Should've seen that coming."

"Oh, there you are!" Astrid said in relief, hurrying over. "There's a rather irritable white horse that seems to want to see you, if translations are correct."

Eugene and Rapunzel shared an overjoyed look. "Maximus." They said at the same time, following a confused Astrid to where the horse was waiting.

Rapunzel heard a whinny and a startled yelp, and then Maxius was there, allowing her to stroke his neck while Eugene patted his side. "Who sent you here, Maxie?" Eugene asked.

Rapunzel's eyes were drawn to a note attached to the saddle. \_Darling Rapunzel, we thought that a trained battle-horse would be able to aid you in your journey. We hope that this one is correct, Maximus seemed to be familiar with you. ~Mother and Father\_

Rapunzel smiled. "It seems that parents will be parents no matter where their child is." She said warmly, then blinked when Maximus flattened his ears at someone that was approaching. She turned to see Hiccup eyeing Maxius warily.

"Oh, it's okay, he's probably just smelling predator." Rapunzel reassured him, petting Maximus. "Come on, say hi. He won't bite if I'm here."

Hiccup cautiously extended his hand. "And when you're not?"

Rapunzel shrugged. "If he likes you then it won't be a problem." She told him as Maximus sniffed Hiccup, ears going back up. "And see? You're fine!"

Hiccup nodded. "All the same, why is he here?"

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. "My parents." She quickly added, "Not that I'm complaining, this is great. Maximus helped a lot on our adventures."

Maximus emitted what could only be a horse's way of laughing. Rapunzel giggled, seeing Eugene's annoyed face. "I was not." Eugene defended. "Hey, I lasted pretty long against you with a frying pan! Which, I'll have you know, is still the strangest thing I have ever done. Even teaming up with the Tooth Fairy couldn't take top prize."

Maximus snorted, and when Rapunzel nodded allowed himself to be led to the stable.

Hiccup sighed. "Anyways, Merida wants us four to meet up in her room."

Rapunzel nodded, gave Eugene a quick kiss on the cheek, and followed Hiccup. "Jack awake yet?" She asked, already knowing the answer.

"Am too." Jack replied irritably from behind her. "Don't even go there."

She blinked in surprise. "Oh, uh...good, I didn't feel like getting frozen waking you up."

Jack sighed. "Just because I'm a prankster doesn't mean I have no work ethic. Do you have any idea how much work regulating winter is?"

Hiccup snorted. "Yeah, great job you do at Berk."

Jack rolled his eyes. "Because I really wanna get up close and personal with an island teeming with dragons all capable of turning me into a puddle."

Merida opened her door, glaring at them. "Thought I said in\_side." She muttered.

Jack grinned as they entered her room, but then Rapunzel turned her attention to the room. "Whoa." She breathed. The walls were made of roughly hewn stone bricks with a wooden floor covered by a Celtic looking rug, along with a tapestry of a bear hanging on one wall. She then looked up to see constellations painted on the ceiling.

Merida cleared her throat. "When yu're done gawking." She said in amusement, though Rapunzel guessed she was remembering her own reaction since the admonishment lacked its usual annoyed edge.

"So what did you want to talk about?" She asked, settling on the floor.

"I want to do something, not just talk. That's the point." Merida replied. "We've figured out our powers, so let's use them! Yu said yurself, Jack, that we need to go out and get believers."

Jack nodded. "I'm listening, what ideas do you have?"

Hiccup sighed. "Well, seeing as the big battle will probably end up

being here since that's where the Guardians are, we should most likely get the children of this world to believe."

Jack sighed. "Well, that's easy for me. It's February still, so I can just go around, dish out a few more snow days than normal, frost up some windows, and hope that the children are well versed in folklore."

Merida twirled a lock of hair around her finger. "Well, p'raps yu should let us meet yur other believers, too." She suggested. "That'll help."

Jack groaned, dramatically feigning a swoon. "Do you have any idea how long that could take? I don't have a lot of believers, true, but they're all over the place!"

Rapunzel looked at him. "Fine, what are some other options?"

Jack tapped on his staff. "That's the problem. Normally Guardians don't have to go around hunting for believers. But us, we don't have a holiday or a whole lot of publicity."

Hiccup shrugged. "Maybe take it in steps? Introduce us to local believers, give the surrounding areas some snow, and then slowly make our way outwards. The Guardians can't fault us as long as we're careful."

Merida looked up. "Are we decided?" She asked.

"Let's go." Jack agreed, standing up.

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Yup. There shall be more action soon. Don't worry, once things start going full swing it will be much more active than this game of tag they seem to be playing at the moment.

## 17. Chapter 17: Double Take

### Chapter 17

Jack Frost

Jack had a mischievous glint in his eye as he quietly led Rapunzel onto the roof. "You guys ready?" He asked, leaning over to observe Hiccup and Merida on Toothless. "No noise, remember." He added.

Merida rolled her eyes. "Yu want me to gag myself or somethin'?"

Jack grinned. "I'm not completely against the idea." He taunted before pulling his head back to forestall the outburst that would have followed. He flashed a grin at Rapunzel. "Will we need to give you a gag, Punzie?"

She glared at him, tapping her frying pan into her palm. "No."

Jack sidled away in what he hoped was an inconspicuous manner, before

looked back at Hiccup. "You ready?"

"Let's fly." Hiccup agreed. Without further ado, Jack swung Rapunzel onto his back, using the winds to propel him off the roof to fly alongside Toothless.

"So far, so good." Jack observed with a grin. "We'll start in Canada and Russia, I have the most believers there since it's always so cold..."

"Okay, sounds good." Hiccup told him. "You gonna take us there or what?"

"Thought you'd never ask." Jack told him with a smirk as he started heading down. "I think one of our best chances would be with a little girl in Russia, she calls me Jokul Frosti so I think she's pretty into mythology."

"J-Jokul Frosti?" Hiccup sputtered in laughter. "B-but that's one of our mythological figures!" He giggled.

Jack shot him a frozen glare. "You don't say." He said in a tone devoid of humor before suddenly dropping into a straight plunge towards the ground. He smirked when he heard Hiccup and Merida cursing his name while Rapunzel settled for trying to make him go deaf with her screaming.

He pulled up out of the drop to land lightly on the roof of a house, prying Rapunzel's arms off to rap his staff against a window. A young girl popped her head out, and her eyes flew open when she saw Jack. "Jokul!" She gasped, rapidly grabbing onto woodwork near her window to clamber up onto the roof with Jack's help.

Her eyes widened when she saw everyone else. "Tyr, you have a dragon?" She asked in confusion, looking at Hiccup.

It was Jack's turn to burst into laughter, falling over and pounding the roof with one hand. "Tyr! S-she said you were Tyr!" He gasped when he was able to speak somewhat coherently.

"Who's Tyr?" Merida asked, jostling Hiccup.

Hiccup sighed. "He's a Norse god, representing honorable battle, strategy, courage, and cunning in war. He sacrificed his right hand in order to bind a dangerous spirit, thus proving that he was willing to give of himself, literally, for the better of the whole."

"Or in this case, a leg." Jack muttered. That earned him a searing glare from Hiccup, but the girl had already moved to Merida.

"Brighid!" She squeaked.

Merida rolled her eyes. "Yu're mistaken."

The girl shook her head vehemently. "No, Brighid is a Celtic goddess that is often associated with fire and known for her preference of arrows and spears for weapons."

Merida sighed. "Well, half right, I use a sword instead. Most of the

time."

Jack sighed as he gestured towards Rapunzel. "And?"

The girl shrugged. "Rapunzel, she's a common tale among several cultures."

Rapunzel looked distinctly relieved not to have another moniker, while Jack sighed in disappointment. He then looked at the girl. "Ok, Alina, do you think you could tell your friends about us? There's a big battle between the, erm, \_deities\_ coming and we need as many believers as we can get."

Alina nodded, eyes wide. "\_Da\_." She agreed. "I will."

Jack ruffled her hair, then with a sweep of his staff and an excited squeal on Alina's part he hooked her around the waist and deposited her back in her room. "See ya!" He called as he grabbed Rapunzel and flew into the air with another angry shout from Merida as Hiccup tried to catch up.

He felt Rapunzel start laughing as much as he heard it, then he heard her call back, "Come on, Tyr, Brighid! Keep up!"

"That's it!" Merida yelled, straightening and grabbing for her bow. "Yu're both dead!"

"Evasive maneuvers?" Rapunzel suggested in a small voice.

"Evasive maneuvers." Jack agreed wholeheartedly before turning in a tight circle to spin off to the left and rising rapidly to immerse himself in clouds. He then cut back, seeing a shadow underneath him as he flew directly over Toothless. He then dropped out of the clouds before they went in after him, laughed briefly to get their attention, then sped away.

Jack winced when he heard Merida yelling for Toothless to go faster and started scanning for somewhere to escape into. He spied a forest and was about to drop when he remembered his last experience with forests. He muttered a small curse and instead vied for a ravine that he spotted.

Rapunzel squealed when he dropped into the ravine, dodging around rocks. Any protest dried up when an arrow skidded across the stone very near Jack's staff. For his part, Jack spun rapidly, throwing up a flurry of snow to hide where they were before tucking himself and Rapunzel into a small niche.

"I...did not expect her to actually shoot." He muttered, peering out as best he could without revealing himself. He blinked in surprise when a pebble clattered past his face.

"Well, calling us by those names wasn't very nice." Hiccup pointed out. "And you two forget, Toothless is a dragon, he's meant to hunt. You're kinda stuck now."

In response Jack tightened his grip around Rapunzel, zapped ice straight upwards, then dropped before leveling out along the bottom of the ravine, at times running to maintain his speed. When he saw the ravine narrow up ahead, he took that as a signal to shoot back up

into the air, following one side of the ravine up as it turned into a cliff with rock jags turning the cliff face into a dangerous obstacle course.

Rapunzel turned, confused. "They're going the other way. Oh! Merida is waving at us and pointing." She observed.

Jack, unable to see her expression, rolled his eyes. "Yeah, pointing where her next arrow's gonna go." He joked, dodging a spire that jutted out particularly far. As they continued upwards, he felt Rapunzel shift as she looked in the direction that Merida was supposedly pointing in.

"Oh, no, Jack! Look out!" She screamed.

Jack winced at how loud she was, especially so near his ears, then the message registered as he looked around. When he saw a blast of nightmare sand headed his way he let out a panicked shout and tried to veer off course.

All that accomplished was that instead of them both taking the hit, Jack managed to swerve enough out of the way the the sand hit him only. He felt his staff ripped from his hands and go spiraling down, and then he blacked out, going into freefall.

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Before any of you guys kill me, sorry I didn't update yesterday. I also had a request for more cliffhangers. Here you go. Literally.

## 18. Chapter 18: Rescue

### Chapter 18

Rapunzel Fitzherbert

((Yes, I know that Rapunzel had her turn right before Jack did, but I figured it was only nice to let her perspective be next since she's kinda the one freefalling along with everyone's favorite, albeit unconscious, winter sprite))

Rapunzel screamed when the blast receded, the only thing it accomplishing was ripping the ties off her hair and knocking Jack out. She watched as his staff spiraled downwards, not that it would be much use in the situation. Saving them both was up to her.

Rapunzel cast around desperately, then her eyes lit on the spire that Jack had been forced to dodge in the chase just moments before. An unwelcome hindrance had just become their hope. Rapunzel gathered a chunk of hair, wrapped her legs around Jack's midriff, then swung the hair, watching in satisfaction as it wrapped around the spire, pulling tight to send her swinging. She adjusted her grip, and with a small whoop of triumph managed to catch Jack's staff before it shattered on a rock.

She then looked around. Stopping was the next point of order, and she



didn't see how she would manage that. A dark laugh made her glare fiercely up at the lone figure standing tall on a cloud of nightmare sand.

"How sweet, even risking yourself to save his staff." Pitch cooed, swirling sand between his fingers. "But that decision may cost you."

He was interrupted by the telltale whistle of an angry Night Fury getting ready to blow something to kingdom come. "Will it?" Rapunzel asked sweetly as Pitch was forced to throw up huge amounts of nightmare sand to block the blast.

She then yelped as her hair slipped from its tenuous hold on the spire, but Toothless quickly snatched her with his claws and deposited her and Jack on the opposite side of the ravine. "Yu help Jack, we'll hold ugly off!" Merida instructed before Toothless took into the air once more, roaring a challenge.

Rapunzel figured protesting was going to be too little, too late at this point and instead gathered all her hair up before something could happen to it. She sighed as she looked at Jack, realizing that she didn't know where he had been hurt.

"Well, standing here won't do anything." She reminded herself, luckily noticing slight bruising on his temple. "And that looks painful." She muttered, carefully laying her hair over his forehead. She quickly sang the healing incantation (which I am NOT doing every single time) and was relieved to see Jack's eyes flutter open as she was attempting to do something with her hair once more.

"Leave it, it could be useful." Jack advised her as he pulled himself into a sitting position. His eyes then flickered with alarm. "My sta-" He began, but then relaxed when he spotted it on the ground. "So, um, what happened?" He inquired, fingering the gnarled wood.

Rapunzel shrugged. "Pitch attacked, you protected me but as a result you lost your staff and was knocked unconscious. The force of the blow was enough to break my hair loose, so I used it like a lasso to hook onto a spire and swing to safety with the help of a certain dragon."

Jack nodded, standing up. "Well, thanks to what I'm assuming was your hair, I feel great. Shall we?" He asked gesturing upwards.

Rapunzel shook her head. "I'm not much use in a fight..." She reminded him.

Jack frowned. "But I can't leave you alone, and I don't wanna make them fight Pitch alone!" He told her, eyes distressed. "You can't make me choose like that!"

Rapunzel bit her lip. "You saw how much use I was!"

Jack raised an eyebrow. "Well, I don't see the fact that you saved my life as very useless." He pointed out dryly.

Rapunzel frowned. "But..."

"And you're the one that warned me of the sand in the first place." He continued. His gaze then flicked to something behind Rapunzel. "Oh, damn." He muttered.

Rapunzel whirled, expecting to see Pitch, but instead was greeted by the sight of the snow globe's portal shrinking to allow the sound of sleigh bells to fill the air. "That was fast." She sighed, rubbing one arm.

The sound of arguing reached her ears, and she rolled her eyes. Some rescue mission, if they killed each other before they could reach the ones they were trying to help. She then squealed as she felt Jack grab her from behind, and then lift into the air to propel them towards the sleigh.

"I trust you won't complain, seeing as this fixes both our problems." He muttered into her ear right before they reached the sleigh. "Hey, North!" He called. "Dare you to let her drive!"

Rapunzel started to stammer a protest, but she had already been deposited in the sleigh, with Jack zooming back into battle. "Y-you don't have to..." She muttered.

North laughed. "Will be great fun, yes?" He bellowed, happily handing her the reins as he pulled out two swords from nowhere.

"O-oh, struth!" Bunny cursed. "I knew we shoulda taken the tunnels!"

Rapunzel started to wonder what he meant by tunnels before remembering that she was the one guiding the reindeer. She took a breath. How hard could this be?

"Yah!" She screamed, snapping the reins. As the sleigh sped up, she adjusted her feet to allow for better balance before guiding the sleigh into a cloud of Nightmares that were shaped as various birds of prey.

Bunny seemed to notice this as well, and the distraction seemed to cure him of his nausea almost immediately as he grabbed his boomerangs and threw them into two Nightmares approaching Rapunzel. Sandy and Tooth took to the air, and within five minutes they had reduced the Nightmares back to nothing.

"Woohoo! Best! Day! Ever!" Rapunzel cried as she sent the sleigh into a smooth banking turn to bring them around behind Pitch.

"Everyone loves the sleigh." Bunny muttered to North, causing the large Russian to chortle loudly. "Hey, hey, watch it sheila!" He yelled, seeing Rapunzel about to crash.

"I got it, I got it!" Rapunzel insisted. "This isn't so different from steering a carriage, and I've learned about spatial distancing in flying from Jack."

"Um, sweetie, while that's great and all, this sleigh is a good deal bigger than Jack is." Tooth pointed out gently.

"Knew that." Rapunzel mumbled as she yanked on the reins, narrowly avoiding upsetting the sleigh. "Ok, North, can you..."

North nodded, taking the reins back. Rapunzel sat next to Bunny with a relieved sigh, glad the ordeal was over. She twiddled a strand of hair between her fingers nervously as she watched Toothless carry Hiccup and Merida out of danger from Pitch's latest attack while Jack was attempting to sneak up on Pitch. He was somewhat successful, managing to freeze the cloud of sand Pitch was on before having to retreat from the furious Nightmares.

Merida took advantage of the distraction to send several arrows hissing towards Pitch, who simply let himself fall before managing to break the ice constricting the cloud. Jack followed, letting Merida's arrows destroy the Nightmares that were stupid enough to chase him. Jack's staff glowed bright blue, and then he sent what almost looked like searing blue lightning bolts at Pitch.

"Whoa..." Rapunzel muttered. "Wait. Something's up!" She yelled, leaning over the side of the sleigh. One of the Nightmares almost seemed to be speaking to Pitch, and then a sick grin twisted itself across his face.

"Well, it's been lovely playing." He announced with a bow. "But now I'm afraid that I must be going, apparently there's some news that I just can't miss." With that a large shadow manifested underneath him and he sank down in a split second, the Nightmares vanishing as he did.

The sleigh shook violently, and Rapunzel looked over to see Jack standing on the wing fixed to the other side of the sleigh.

"Hey guys!" He greeted the senior Guardians with a cheeky wave. "What's up!"

"Forcin' us to come after ya, that's what!" Bunny snapped.

Jack shrugged. "I didn't make you, it was your decision." He reminded Bunny before swinging his legs over the side to climb into the sleigh. "So, lemme guess, we're grounded or something for actually trying to be proactive." He continued nonchalantly.

Rapunzel sighed. "Being antagonistic won't help, you know." She pointed out tiredly. "Even if you do have a point."

Jack looked startled. "Are you agreeing with me?"

Rapunzel smiled. "Don't get used to it."

North seemed to decide that they were done bickering, because he pulled out a snow globe and yelled, "TO THE POLE!"

Rapunzel winced at the volume, but then they were sucked into the portal and landing outside the Pole. "Well, that was productive." She sighed.

"Well, we learned that Pitch is up to somethin', that's better than nothin', right?" Merida pointed out as Toothless landed, having just made it through the portal before it closed.

Rapunzel nodded, then realised who had answered and jumped out of the sleigh, running over. "Are either of you hurt?" She asked.

"We're fine, Toothless made sure of that." Hiccup replied for Merida.  
"Come on, let's get inside. It's freezing out here."

"Is not." Rapunzel heard Jack mutter as he followed them inside.  
"It's barely below the freezing point."

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Yay, happy sorta-ending. But you knew that would happen, I hope,  
what's the point of the Big FOUR if two of them get killed of right  
away, yes?

## 19. Chapter 19: Breaking News

\_Chapter 19\_

\_Mother Gothel\_

\_Gothel smiled as Pitch appeared out of nowhere, stepping daintily  
from the shadows. She then frowned. "You're not moving normally.  
Something happen?"\_

\_Pitch glared daggers at her. "Nothing that...YOU...need to concern  
yourself with."\_

\_Gothel laughed, fluttering a hand near her neck. "Oh, I'm wounded,  
especially after all the hard work I put into our newest addition!  
The beast is quite rare, you know, especially after Dragon Boy killed  
off the local one."\_

\_Pitch's eyes snapped to hers in utter shock. "You tamed a Red  
Death."\_

\_Gothel rolled her eyes. "Puh-lease. Nobody can. I put a simple  
little enslavement spell on it's little mind, that's all." She  
trilled, making a subtle gesture to the hulking dragon.\_

\_Pitch grinned. "And I can think of more than one little spirit that  
wouldn't be happy to see this...lovely creature." He sighed happily,  
pretending not to notice the grotesque being the size of several  
large mansions huddled in a corner of his precious lair. He'd never  
get the stench out, not all the way, and Gothel smiled. She had known  
that full well.\_

\_"And what of the plans for DunBroch?" Gothel pressed to bring  
attention away from the dragon. "I hope you've been doing more than  
getting into pointless catfights."\_

\_Pitch hissed angrily at her, and nightmare sand swirled dangerously  
until he calmed himself. "It is underway, unlike your little job here  
it will take time to darken the mind of a human enough to truly  
desire to become a demon bear and stay that way."\_

\_Gothel huffed. "I thought that was your specialty."\_

\_Pitch rolled his eyes. "But of course, but finding someone who is  
not only easily corrupted but also has the means to pay the witch is  
another thing altogether."\_

\_Gothel sighed. "Then give them the means."\_

\_"Knowing the witch she'd probably know the difference." Pitch scoffed.\_

\_Gothel firmed her lips. "And what of the confrontation?" She hissed, changing the subject. "Did that accomplish anything?"\_

\_Pitch turned a baleful gaze upon her. "I almost took Frost out of the running for a good little bit, but your little flower used her remarkably long hair to save him and then heal him. It's quite the annoying ability she has." He growled furiously.\_

\_Gothel smirked. "Well, seeing as my survival is no longer tied to that hair, I have a little secret for you." She announced, lazily twirling a strand of hair between her fingers. "Did you know? Her hair is a blessing, born from the flower made of a drop of pure sunlight. Such a rare gift has comebacks, as I discovered. Once her hair is cut, it loses all it's lovely power, never to grow again!" She told Pitch with a small smile. "That would take care of many problems."\_

\_Pitch matched her smile. "So it would. Perhaps I'll pay the Pole a visit, keep them on their toes. We'll wait for the demon bear before making a true assault?"\_

\_Gothel nodded, relieved that he was finally listening to sense. "Yes. No more cat-and-mouse chases. Even if it is luring them into a false sense of security, that fact that you voluntarily left the battlefield, thus saving them, is not going to sit well."\_

\_Pitch smirked. "Exactly. I'll not lose twice, I'll take my time this round."\_

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Dun dun dun and all that. Yup. Stuff is going down now.

## 20. Chapter 20: Fire and Ice

### Chapter 20

Merida DunBroch

Merida rubbed her thumb over a carving she had just etched into her bow. Things had been stressed lately, and she had jumped at the chance to get away from it all. She had slipped away to her room, and then spent the past hour or so adding new carvings to the bow. She had fashioned a new one after the old one was burnt, and she had to admit that the new bow was almost better than the old one. Almost.

Her head snapped up when there was a knock at the door.

"Merida?"

"Not locked." Merida replied. "Come in."

The door swung open to reveal Astrid standing there, looking

uncomfortable. "Um, hi. I was wondering if, uh, you'd like to, uh, train." The blond girl muttered.

Merida grinned. "Aye, I'd love ta!" She sprang up, grabbing her sword. "Where?"

Astrid grinned back. "This way." She replied.

"So, why were yu so nervous?" Merida asked. "I don't bite that often."

Astrid sighed. "Life's just...weird right now, and, I mean, you're like...superpowered and stuff and I'm not and it's weird not being in the top of the hierarchy and..."

Merida lifted an eyebrow. "Technically yu'd never surpass me anyways, I'm a princess." She then sighed. "But, really, yu're a dragon rider. Not just tagging along because yu have to, yu can actually ride and fight on a dragon. Yu can't beat that easily."

Astrid grinned. "Yeah, I guess being surrounded by Yetis and elves isn't the best for one's sanity." She mused.

Merida laughed. "Sanity? Wot's that?"

Astrid snickered. "Funny, I dunno. Hiccup was lecturing me about it and..."

Merida started snorting, she was laughing so hard. "Ah! I can hear mum now! 'A Princess doesn't chortle!'" She mimed, turning her nose up and clasping her hands primly. She then dissolved back into snickers. "Not that she's any be'er, nowadays."

Astrid pushed open a door that Merida wouldn't have noticed otherwise. "It's in here, North said that it's not technically a fighting room but it would be ok."

Merida nodded as she set the sheathe to her sword down, swinging the blade experimentally. "Aye."

"Ready?" She heard Astrid ask.

"As I'll ever b...ach!" Merida started to reply, then cut off as she had to dodge a strike from an ax. "Wot do yu mean, low on the hierarchy? Yu shouldn't be allowed to just carry those around, nobody could stop yu!" She demanded as she parried a quick set of strikes.

"Well...I didn't realize you'd have so little experience against axes." Astrid defended.

Merida smirked. "I do, but against men that are a wee bit bigger and slower."

Astrid smirked as she flipped one ax, grabbing it lightly by the blade before hurling it at Merida. In a flash of panic, Merida cut at the ax, with her sword, not noticing the glow as her powers reacted to the situation. She noticed halfway through and forced the glow down, but not before Astrid's ax had her sword halfway imbedded in it.

"...Sorry?" Merida offered.

Astrid shrugged, twirling her remaining ax. "Never really liked that one anyways." She quipped. "And I brought plenty others."

Merida grinned before closing her eyes, forcing the sword to heat back up, and was rewarded by the sound of the ax clanging on the floor. She opened her eyes to see the blade of Astrid's other ax hovering inches from her face.

"Wot? Yu trying ta?" Merida squeaked as she backpedaled.

Astrid shrugged. "You can't be doing that in a battle, I was being nice." She told Merida unapologetically. "What if I had been Pitch, or, or one of those other guys?"

Merida sighed. "Aye, that's true. I'm just not..."

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Practiced enough. That's all there is to it. Come on, do it again."

Merida blinked. "It happens in response to emotion, though."

"Evidently not, you looked pretty calm when you freed your sword. You just have to get used to using your power. So, come on. Let's train." Astrid commanded, readying her remaining ax.

Merida furrowed her brows. "Yu really want to lose yur ax?"

She then gritted her teeth as obnoxiously familiar laughter reached her. She turned to see Jack and Hiccup standing in the doorway. "How did yu...?"

Jack rolled his eyes. "Simple, really. When you leave the door open, it kinda lets noise get out." He explained. He then pointed his staff lazily at Merida. "So, you game?"

She charged at him for an answer. When she moved to cut downwards, Jack swayed to the side, then placing one icy hand on her shoulder, he neatly vaulted over her to land in the center of the room.

"You'll find I'm pretty hard to hit." Jack told her before smirking and resting his staff against the ground, inconspicuously coating the floor in a thin layer of ice.

"Do yu think I've never fought outside before in the winter?" Merida inquired. She smiled at Jack's startled expression. "Oh, of course I noticed the little trick with the ice!" She told him, moving forwards at an angle, beginning to circle Jack.

Jack shrugged, moving backwards to match her pace. Merida narrowed her eyes. With the gait he was using he'd be off balance...\_there\_. With a wordless shout, Merida pounced forwards, keeping her feet steady so that she didn't slip. Jack's eyes widened as he started to tip over from his legs crossing due to an attempted dodge.

What Merida didn't expect was for Jack collapse completely to the

floor and roll neatly out of the way before snapping one leg into a sweep kick. She danced backwards, chopping down. Jack yelped and hit the strike out of the way with his staff before doing a quick backflip into a standing position.

"I don't need any amputations, thank you." Jack told Merida cheerfully, though she could detect a slightly forced tone.

Merida twirled the sword into an aggressive position. "Dunno, yu must have gangrene at this point, walking through snow with yur bare feet."

Jack sighed. "In all technicalities, I am cold. So..." Without warning, he interrupted himself with a rapid attack, jumping up and snapping a kick at Merida's head.

Merida scoffed, twisting to avoid the kick and lunging forwards. Jack rotated mid air, deflecting the strike with his staff before landing sliding away using the ice.

"Not bad, frizzy." He acknowledged a bit breathlessly. "But you're forgetting something."

"And wot's that?" Merida asked suspiciously.

Jack grinned. "The door's still open." With that he summoned the wind, which blasted in through the doorway to rocket him upwards, from where he began pelting Merida with snow.

Merida noticed Hiccup moving to close the door, and stopped him, "No, don't! I need to be able to beat him with his full range of power."

She then jumped as Jack landed behind her, leaning on her shoulder amicably. "In all due respect, you want full power, this would hafta be outside. There's not nearly enough room in here for full use of winter magic."

Merida elbowed him mercilessly in the gut, causing him to back up, doubling over. "That bein' said, I never said yu couldn't learn to deal with handicaps either. But still, leave the door open." She instructed Hiccup.

A blur of motion in her peripheral vision attracted Merida's attention, and she instinctively lashed out. She blinked at her brain caught up to her arm, realizing that she had just blocked Jack's staff, much to both their surprise.

"Well, someone's got reflexes." Jack muttered as he distanced himself again.

Merida smirked. "Aye, and yu might wanna start flyin'." She warned. Adrenaline was flowing strongly, and she focused on that instead of her emotions this time. To her delight, her blade glowed a dull red. Not as warm as when she really wanted heat, but considering her opponent, this should be enough.

As expected, Jack swallowed slightly before gripping his staff in a more defensive manner. "You still gotta hit me with that." He pointed out. With no other warning his staff glowed a bright blue and he sent



a bolt of ice at Merida. She moved her sword to intercept, grinning when the ice vaporised with a sharp hiss.

"Yu still gotta hit me with \_that\_." Merida retorted. Jack looked incensed, but then had to roll out of the way when Merida darted forwards. Merida rolled her eyes, locking her legs so that she skidded on the ice, turning slightly, then using the new angle to continue her attack on Jack. "And I did warn yu about the winter training."

In response Jack slashed his staff through the air, creating a thick miniature blizzard that howled around Merida. She squinted in alarm, glow quickly fading from the sword as she tried to adjust to the new situation. She stiffened when she felt coarse wood loop around her neck. Jack had hooked the crook of his staff around her! With a gentle yank, he unbalanced her, and the blizzard cleared to allow her to see the crook now pointed at her, still emitting a dull blue glow.

"I win." Jack announced, moving his grip on the staff so that it rested on his shoulder. "I'd offer to help you up but I have the feeling I'd get burned." He told her apologetically.

Merida sighed, quickly scrambling to a standing position. "Most likely." She admitted. She dusted imaginary dust off herself, then looked at Hiccup and Astrid, who both looked shellshocked. "Wot?" She demanded testily.

"Nothing!" Hiccup replied a little too quickly. "I was just thinking that we should go see...the globe! Yeah! Make sure belief is still high and all that."

Merida rolled her eyes. "That's believable." She muttered, but crossed over to her discarded equipment. She quickly belted the scabbard around her waist, before sheathing her sword in a practiced motion. "But let's go, not much to see here."

"Besides your complete and utter defeat, of course." Jack pointed out lightly as he followed them out. "But you weren't half bad, I suppose."

"If I had my arrohs yu wouldn't have stood a chance." Merida challenged.

"That, I do not doubt." Jack replied easily. "But then, you'd get bored without me bugging you!" He added, jostling Merida with his elbow.

"Keep pushin' it, Frost." Merida challenged.

In response she let out a very loud squeal of surprise as she felt Jack shove snow down her back before taking off like the devil was behind him. Which wasn't that inaccurate, considering Merida's current mood and the fact that she was reaching for her sword again as she gave chase.

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Why do I pick on Merida? Good question. Probably just because it's fun. I really enjoyed writing this chapter, hope you liked it!

## 21. Chapter 21: Tables are Turned

### Chapter 21

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup rolled his eyes as Jack and Merida were finally stopped from their destructive rampage by several ticked off Yetis. Jack was currently slung upside down over the shoulder of the Yeti he had called Phil, and both were laughing at the spectacle of watching the Yetis trying to contain the still furious Merida.

Hiccup frowned when he heard Phil ask Jack something in their gibberish language, and Jack shrugged as well before giving a soft reply that Hiccup couldn't hear due to the ruckus. What had that been about?

"Enough!" North's voice boomed as he advanced on the scene. Merida innocently elbowed a Yeti away from her before standing tall, hands clasped primly behind her back.

"Jack started it." She began immediately.

"You don't say!" Jack retorted. "Who else would start a mess this big so quickly?"

"ENOUGH!" North reiterated at a much higher volume. "Now, we must stop the bickering and decide what to do!"

Jack twisted, rolling off Phil's shoulder with a practiced motion and bouncing away before he could be grabbed again. "Well, we're actually doing something now?"

"Aye, ya seem to be leadin' us on goose chases when we don't." Bunny pointed out.

Jack leaned against his staff. "But I thought you liked hunting, you hide eggs for hunts every Easter, right?"

Bunny's ears dropped. "Tha's different, mate."

Jack smirked. "Sure it is. So, North," He continued, switching targets, "by \_do something\_, do you mean like go out and kick butt or..."

"Last time I checked what you were doing was not 'kicking butt', Jack." North pointed out mildly. "We need more information."

Jack sighed. "War is about taking risks, North."

North leaned against a desk. "Oh? And what risks are right risks? How can you tell?"

Jack smirked. "Well, you wait until the war's over and then you review the choices."

"Jack, this isn't helping." Hiccup interjected, stepping forwards. "You guys are both right. We don't know nearly enough, but we can't

hide like rabbits in our holes for something to come and dig us out either."

"Excuse me?" Bunny demanded. "Like \_what\_ hiding in holes?"

"In all technicalities you're a Pooka, not an actual rabbit." Jack pointed out as he vaulted up to perch on top of his staff.  
"So..."

"I'm still the Easter BUNNY."

"Whatever, Kangaroo." Jack shot back. "Because, really, what rabbits are six foot one and masters of Tai Chi and the ancient art of Crikey?"

"That's it, Frost!" Bunny yelled, bounding forwards. He then went tumbling as Jack rapidly iced the floors before flying up to land on top of the globe.

"What's it?" Jack asked. He then perked up. "Oh, oh! Are we playing tag?"

"Wh-wha?" Bunny stammered, taken aback. The next moment Hiccup rolled his eyes as Jack dropped down, tapping Bunny on the top of his head before flying off.

"Tag, no tagbacks!" Jack called.

"Oh, that...ah, how do ya play it?" Bunny muttered.

Jack snorted. "You have to touch a person that's playing to make them 'it' and if the person who tags you says no tagbacks then you can't tag them until you tag someone else and then are 'it' again. Pretty simple. Oh! No weapons, gotta use your hands."

Hiccup sighed, as he backed away from Bunny. "Another good idea is to always try to have some level of confusion to who's it, otherwise we'll all know who it is." That being said, he and Astrid took off running. "And I say that the Yetis have to play referee, they all look the same!" Hiccup shouted back right as Bunny was going to tag Phil.

Bunny cursed in Australian before leaping up, bouncing off a pillar, and bounding onto the next floor where he tagged Tooth. "No tagbacks!" He called.

"Oh, it is so on!" Tooth yelled, flying up and zipping down into the masses. Hiccup heard Merida shout in frustration and quickly adjusted his course to avoid her. He then heard Tooth's indignant squeal.

"Yu never said 'no tagbacks'!" Merida pointed out as she came into view, Tooth giving chase. "And no tagbacks, while we're at it."

Tooth rolled her eyes before flying up, but a cackle interrupted the game rather rudely.

All present at the Pole instantly turned to give venomous glares to Pitch, who was occupying the same spot that Jack had moments before starting the game. "You know, I was expecting you all to be preparing

fruitlessly for my downfall...but, playing a child's game? That has to be a new low."

Jack lobbed a snowball at Pitch, who for once in his life actually dodged. "Yeah, well, shows what you know." Jack challenged. "Playing games is one of the best ways there is to relax and get stronger at the same time."

Pitch smirked. "Oh, I have a game too, but it won't be very relaxing for you." He announced as nightmare sand oozed from around him, sinking into the pores of the woodwork to disappear. "Let's play 'who will be first'! It's where you all try to figure out who I'm going to attack, and then I kill them before you can do a thing! Doesn't that sound lovely?"

In response, Hiccup gaped as ice suddenly coated the globe, sending Pitch careening to the ground. "Well, Jack certainly has a lot more guts than I would ever have in this situation." He muttered to Astrid, who merely nodded, hefting her ax thoughtfully from one hand to the other.

She then seemed to come to a decision and threw the ax as hard as she could at Pitch right as he stood. To her surprise, a Nightmare rose up out of the wood to block.

Hiccup next saw a flash of golden light as a rather angry looking Sandy stomped in frustration, sending his own sand into the wood to destroy the nightmare sand.

Pitch grinned. "Very good, but not quick enough. You forgot the game! Now, since Jack thought that attacking the one in charge was in the rules, I'm changing it a bit. You see, I couldn't help but notice that there is a certain lovely lady whose hair has been quite useful. Now, I can't have that continuing. But since Jack bent the rules, I will too."

"Not if you are stopped first!" North bellowed, pulling out both swords and charging forwards.

Pitch rolled his eyes, disappearing and then reappearing on a higher balcony. "Too late." He sneered as a shriek split the air. "You forget, Jack, I did tell you that you make a mess of everything." He spat cruelly.

"PITCH!" Bunny roared. "You no-good, stinking..." He charged forwards, but Pitch was already gone, just before Sandy was able to attack, having finally gotten rid of the sand.

Silence reigned for a few moments, and surprisingly for everyone it was Hiccup who found his voice first. "Rapunzel." He muttered, and the next moment Astrid had his arm in a vise grip as they both ran for what Jack had told them was the 'elevator'. Merida, Bunny and North quickly joined them.

When the elevator reached the floor that Rapunzel was on, Hiccup let out a sigh of relief. Rapunzel was leaning against Eugene, sobbing. Both were ok. He then noticed Jack staring in horror at the brown hair pooled on the floor.

Hiccup blinked. "Wait. She...was blond before. Why is her

hair..."

Rapunzel sniffed and looked at him, drawing attention to her hair that barely swayed now, having been cut into a neat bob. "When...when my hair is cut it turns brown and loses it's powers." She explained. "I'm just a normal girl now."

"No, you're not." Hiccup told her, crossing his arms. "You're a Guardian. Your hair can't have been the only thing. You'll figure it out eventually."

Rapunzel looked at him, and he could tell that she still was dubious. That was when the Guardian of Hope itself stepped in.

"Look, sheila." Bunny said gently as he crouched near her. "This is terrible, and I know ya feel like ya've lost everythin'. But we're all still here, we'll always be here. And when ya figure out your powers, I promise ya that I'll hold Pitch while you punch."

Rapunzel gave a watery smile, then giggled as Jack commented, "Awwwww. You do care."

Merida sighed, then impulsively darted forwards, hugging Rapunzel. Hiccup looked at Astrid, then the two of them moved forwards, Astrid pulling Eugene into the hug as well. Within another minute, all the Guardians were participating in a giant group hug, with Rapunzel on the verge of suffocation in the middle. Hiccup could see her smile though, and knew that they'd get through this.

When they released her, Jack clenched his fist. "So, who's ready to help Punzie give Pitch one nasty surprise?" He asked with a steely glint in his eye.

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Because the continuity break was bugging me. If you wanna suggest what her powers should be, go ahead, though I have a vague idea what I want them to be.

## 22. Chapter 22: A Little Fun

### Chapter 22

Jack Frost

Jack frowned as he froze several elves that had been carrying a suspicious bag. Honestly, they should really get the hint that this was NOT the time to try and get him to wear shoes. The entire atmosphere of the Pole had become dimmer somehow, and for once he was at a loss for what to do.

Jack's attention was caught by a purple figure leaning against a pillar, and he sighed. He then summoned a wind, letting the sudden chill announce his arrival. Rapunzel looked at him despondently before returning her gaze to the hair that had been meticulously gathered into a large bundle.

"Hey there, Punzie. You okay?" He asked, kneeling down beside her.

Rapunzel nodded. "Yes...no...no I'm not. I just...can't believe that it's gone!"

Jack poked the pile of hair, which he had to admit was freaking him out a bit. "Well, technically it's still right here." He pointed out. He then blinked as he noticed the texture of the hair. "Hey, Punzie, you got a paint brush handy?" He asked.

Rapunzel shook her head, but a passing Yeti tossed a new brush to Jack. Jack nodded his thanks, then felt the texture of the bristles. Rapunzel stared. "What are you..."

Jack grinned, then tickled Rapunzel with the paintbrush. She giggled and leaned away, but then returned to being somber. Jack sighed, then tried again. "So, Punzie. If we could use the hair for something else, would that be ok with you?"

Rapunzel shrugged. "Not that it's a whole lot of use now."

Jack grinned. "Good. Feel the brush." He instructed. Rapunzel complied, surprisingly. "Now feel the hair." He continued. Rapunzel shot him a strange look but complied.

Her eyes widened. "It's...a very similar texture. I suppose that losing it's power makes the hair grow drier." She looked up at Jack. "Do you realize how much hair it takes to make a paint brush though?"

Jack gave Rapunzel a look. "Because sheer volume of hair is something we're really short on right now." He pointed out. He then stood, offering her a hand. "C'mon, I'll tell North to use it to make you a painting set, okay?"

Rapunzel wiped her eyes and stood with his help. "Y-yeah. I guess this really isn't the time to be moping over something like hair."

Jack rolled his eyes and hit her gently with his staff. "It wasn't just hair, Punzie, we can all understand. You saw what I was like when I thought that I had lost my staff."

Rapunzel nodded, then looked up when she heard North call their names.

"North!" Jack called, leaning over the bannister. "Perfect timing! We have a craft idea for you!" He beckoned energetically, and North seemed to get the message and hurried to the elevator.

"What is big idea?" North asked in confusion when he saw Rapunzel and her hair. His reply was received when Jack held up the paint brush, grinning like he was the greatest genius in the world.

"Well, Punzie here lost enough hair that I thought that we would have enough to turn it into something she could carry with her everywhere." Jack explained.

North's eyes lit up with the prospect of the challenge before him. "Ah, yes, yes!" He bellowed. "Is good idea!" He called several Yetis over, and they dutifully gave little complaint when they gathered up

the hair.

"And a full paint set, with all the different kinds of brushes." Jack added.

North rolled his eyes. "Yes, am not amatuer, Jack."

Jack snickered. "You sure?" He then tossed the paint brush to a free Yeti, grabbed Rapunzel's wrist, and took off running. "So, is there anyone you feel like pranking?" He inquired once they were a safe distance away. "Any games you want me to start?"

Rapunzel rolled her eyes, obviously thinking he was just joking around. Jack frowned and blocked her path. "What, Jack?" She asked, looking at him tiredly.

Jack matched her look. "Well, Punzie, I made you a valid offer and you haven't replied yet." He told her in a slightly smug tone.

Rapunzel's eyes widened. "So...I say a person, and you'd honestly prank them?"

Jack's eyes sparkled. "I live for pranks, Punzie. Say the word."

Rapunzel considered for a moment before getting a mischievous look on her face. "Alright." She decided. "Let's get Tooth."

Jack grinned. "Any particular reason?"

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. "She wouldn't stop messing with my teeth."

Jack nodded sagely. "In that case..." He got a wicked grin. "Lay low, I'm going to steal some candy either from North or Bunny. We'll spread it around, and then we can watch Tooth and the mini fairies freak out and try to stop everyone from eating them. I'll keep the candies out of the reach of elves, of course."

Rapunzel clapped her hands. "Perfect!" She squealed. "That's perfect!"

Jack laughed. "Of course! Now, keep it down or I might get caught." Without another word he flew off.

As he meandered aimlessly down the hall, he pretended to be scouting for a target for a prank. If people thought that there wasn't a definite plan already in effect, his rapid execution later could lead people to think that perhaps it wasn't him. He slipped into the kitchen, nodding amicably to the Yetis staffing it. They all knew him, he was a regular in here.

Once the Yetis had gotten used to his presence, he ambled around, casually stuffing treats into the pocket of his hoodie. When he judged that he had about half of the available candy stash in the Pole stuffed into that pocket, he made his escape, still moving slowly and waving goodbye to the Yetis just like always.

He then waited until there was nobody else around before hightailing

it back to Rapunzel. He grinned as her eyes flew open as he proceeded to empty the stolen candy into a pile on the floor. "There's a reason I'm on the naughty list." He pointed out before shoving half the pile towards Rapunzel. "Spread that around widely, and always somewhere that the elves can't reach. You don't want to see them on sugar, trust me, tried that once and never again." He instructed before placing his half of the loot back in his pocket.

Rapunzel looked dubious, but then brightened when Jack handed her a sack. "I'll have to stay out of sight, though, won't I?" She asked, realising that the bag wasn't normal for her to carry around.

Jack shrugged. "Yeah, and just act mopey like you had been earlier, most of the time they'll just leave you alone. Well, maybe a bit more cheerful, you looked like someone had just kicked your puppy."

Rapunzel nodded and moved off. Sure enough, when some Yetis saw her, they gave her some space. As a result, nobody saw her sneakily plant a candy right in the middle of the control panel for the globe.

Jack chuckled quietly to himself as he moved in another direction. The placement couldn't have been better, very few would dare to take that candy and those that did would cause mayhem.

After about twenty minutes, Jack and Rapunzel were trying to stifle laughs as they reconvened after finally finishing planting all the candy.

"Best spot you found?" Rapunzel asked him.

"On top of one of the feeding bags for the reindeer." Jack replied with a snicker. "Though your placement on the control panel was sheer genius."

Rapunzel stiffened when she heard a cry, and looked at Jack. Jack quickly eased her mind by shooting her an excited grin before composing his features into confusion and running out. He heard Rapunzel counting softly before cutting through a different passage to emerge later than he did.

"What's going on?" Jack asked, looking around. His eyes lit on a piece of chocolate, and, well, it was fair game this time. With a delighted smile Jack snatched up the candy, and within seconds it he had popped it into his mouth.

"Oh, what happened?" Tooth moaned, looking around at all the candy. When she looked at Jack, he waved at her innocently, deftly letting the wrapper fall to the ground.

"Hey, Tooth! Check it out, this is sweet!" Jack called, congratulating himself for the pun.

"Ah! Jack! You haven't been eating these, have you? They'll rot your teeth!" Tooth squealed in alarm. Jack shrugged, and he saw Tooth deflate when she caught the sparkle in his eyes. "Jack, you are not to..."

"And since when do teens do what they're told when food is concerned?" He asked before grabbing a peppermint and sending it to



meet the chocolate he had finished.

"THAT'S IT!" Tooth yelled. "Girls! Confiscate ALL candy!" She ordered.

Jack barely suppressed laughter when a distraught cloud of mini fairies almost immediately collected over the candy nestled innocently among the controls.

"Oh, great find!" Jack said happily, casually grabbing the sweet with two fingers, gingerly avoiding all the controls before dodging the frantic mini fairies. He smirked in triumph as he managed to eat that sweet as well, though he figured that those fairies had just assigned themselves to be his personal protectors. Ah well. Three candies in about two minutes was pretty good.

He looked up to see Rapunzel shaking with laughter as she ran from a similar cloud of fairies. "Hey, your teeth warrant red-alert protection too?" He called up to her.

She shrugged. "Evidently. Hey, did you do this yourself?" She called down.

Jack blinked. She was a genius! "No, wish I had!" He called back. "Well, 'cept I would've stopped at the collection phase." He added honestly. The only reason why he hadn't was because with Rapunzel involved, this was way more fun.

"Yu really had nothing to do with this?" Merida asked skeptically, coming up from behind with Hiccup and Astrid in tow.

Jack shrugged. "Eh, I'll leave that up to speculation." He replied. So far he hadn't lied, but there wasn't a way to answer that one completely honestly.

"Something tells me you were mincing words with Rapunzel." Hiccup butted in. "Something we should take note of?"

Jack nodded. "When it comes to planning, you guys were wrong place, wrong time." He replied. He then spotted a treat that the mini fairies hadn't gotten to, and faster than they could react he had flown to it and grabbed it. "Yeah!" He yelled. "That makes four!"

Tooth looked about ready to faint. "Jack! Brush your teeth right this instant!"

Jack landed on top of the globe and shrugged. "Hey, it's peppermint! Just as good as brushing teeth!"

He was rewarded with laughter from Merida, and more importantly, Rapunzel. He flew over to her, winking at Eugene. "Operation Cheer Up Punzie is a success, sir." He announced, saluting Eugene.

To his credit, Eugene took the sudden turn of events in stride and saluted back. "Very good, soldier." He replied. "Just don't turn her into too much of a trickster, she's still gotta run a kingdom one day."

Jack shrugged. "Eh, it'll be a pretty fun kingdom that way, won't

it?"

"So, it was you." Bunny sighed. "Well, as much as I'd like ta get on your case about it I gotta say...that was pretty perfect."

Jack let out a whoop and jumped into the air. "Oh, yeah! I impressed the grumpmeister!"

Bunny rolled his eyes. "That was aimed more at Rapunzel, mate."

Jack pouted. "Hey, I planned it!"

He jumped when North patted him on the back. "Yes, we thought so, but now confession makes things much easier, no?"

Jack sighed. "So much for the almost perfect track record for not getting caught this year."

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Oh, you guys have no idea how much fun that was to write. Well, hope you guys enjoy, felt like a little break from all the drama would be nice.

## 23. Chapter 23: Miracle

### Chapter 23

Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel looked up as a Yeti addressed her in it's garbled speech, and she frowned. The Yeti rolled its eyes and beckoned. Rapunzel jumped up immediately and followed the Yeti to North's office. She stepped in, looking about.

"Ah, there she is! Have something for you!" North announced, gesturing to a flat box wrapped in festive paper sitting on a desk.

Rapunzel frowned. "But it's after Christmas."

North waved a hand. "Bah, Christmas is mindset, not just holiday. Open it!"

Rapunzel smiled and, at North's silent prompting, ripped into the paper. She gasped when she pulled a small lavender tool belt out of the packaging. She quickly looped it around her waist, smiling at how it sat perfectly. She then undid one of the pouches, pulling one of the objects inside out. Her eyes widened as she looked at the stunningly crafted paintbrush.

"They're...beautiful." She whispered in awe. She replaced the brush, then noticed one pouch that was shaped differently than the ones carrying the brushes. She opened it, and smiled delightedly when she saw the little bottles of paints. The colors were much brighter and more vivid than anything she had seen before.

"You like?" North asked. He chortled when Rapunzel tackled him with a huge bear hug.

"Yes! These are wonderful!" Rapunzel replied when she let go. "I...I can hardly believe it!" She then looked up at North. "Is it ok if I paint my room a little?"

North chuckled. "Of course!"

Rapunzel squealed like a little girl and dashed out, waving before taking off down the hall. When she reached her room, she was a little disappointed to see Eugene wasn't there, but then she shrugged, selected the brush she wanted, and dug around for the paints she wanted. She was pleased to see that there was a collapsible palette in there, that saved some problems. She filled the palette eagerly and then started painting a flower on the wall.

As she painted, she subconsciously pulled her brush away from the wall. Her eyes almost bugged when she noticed that the flower she was painting had followed the brush off the wall and into the air, where the paint was dripping off her brush to form a stem, soon building another flower that had rooted in the floor.

Rapunzel yanked her brush away, wiping it quickly. To her amazement, she felt a tingle in her feet, and with a rustling sound the paint turned into a living plant. She registered the palette and cleaned brush clattering to the floor, and miraculously the paint didn't spill.

"N-NORTH!" She squealed, flinging open her door.

"Ey, sheila, wha's the big deal?" Bunny asked as he dodged the door.

Wordlessly, Rapunzel pointed at the flower innocently sprouting from the floor, with a mirror image painted on the wall and the painting supplies still scattered on the ground.

"I...think I'll go get North." Bunny agreed before bounding off. Rapunzel watched him go, still in a daze.

She then shrieked as her shoulder was shaken. Merida recoiled in shock, bumping into Hiccup and Jack.

"Wot's with all the screamin'?" Merida asked indignantly, pretending that she hadn't just gotten spooked.

"I painted a flower." Rapunzel replied.

"So?" Merida pressed.

Rapunzel shook her head. "No! I painted a \_flower\_." She repeated, pointing inside her room. The other three peered in, for a moment not comprehending what they were seeing.

Jack burst out laughing. "What did I tell you? Oh, Pitch is going to be so mad about this! How did you do that?"

Rapunzel pondered what had happened. "Well...I was painting the wall, and then for some reason I just pulled the brush away, but the paint followed, like I was painting on the air just like I had been on the wall. When I stopped, the paint was dripping, but instead of making a

puddle it formed a stem and then when I yanked the brush away my feet got all tingly and then the paint turned into a plant."

Jack nodded slowly. "Sounds alot like how I figured out my powers, since I found my staff and had picked it up when it just started turning stuff into ice."

"What is big commotion?" North demanded, shoving past Yetis. When he saw the flower, he blinked for a moment, taking in the grins of the young Guardians as well. He then let out a whoop, doing a small victory dance.

Rapunzel giggled. "Is this really a big deal?"

"Big deal?" North scoffed, grabbing her shoulders with his giant hands. "Bah! Is HUGE deal! You still have powers!"

Rapunzel nodded, dazed from being shaken by the massive strength of the Russian. "But...I can't heal!" She protested.

"You don't know that." Hiccup pointed out. "And while it would be nice if you never had the cause to find out, I'm sure you will. Just because your hair lost it's power doesn't mean that you yourself did. If I remember correctly, your mother drank the essence of that sundrop. Therefore, your hair was just the conduit, like Jack's staff is. He isn't powerless without it, though problems do occur when he's separated from it.

Rapunzel picked up the brush she had dropped. "So...you're saying that I just need to find a new conduit?"

Merida grinned. "Aye, and we can help yu with that."

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I shall start by begging for mercy. I'm sorry! I know that it's been a while since the last update and this is a short chapter but I've been insanely busy and...and...writer's block struck and yes, life's been meaner than usual this week.

## 24. Chapter 24: Rampage

### Chapter 24

Merida DunBroch

Merida sighed as she watched Rapunzel paint increasingly absurd things, and watching all the plants she painted promptly come to life. She chuckled when North came out, his jaw gaping slightly when he saw the state of his workshop.

"Oi, Rapunzel!" Merida called down to her. "Perhaps try doin' this outside where you're not causing property damage!"

Rapunzel paused, looking around. "...Whoops." She muttered. "So, um, is it bad that I don't know how to make those go away?"

Merida smirked. "I'm sure North will think of somethin'. Come on,

let's go outside."

She sighed and rolled her eyes when she heard Hiccup approaching.  
"Leaving us out?"

She didn't deign to turn around, instead shouldering her quiver.  
"Nah, figured yu already have a habit of turning up in the middle of things, so there was no need to invite yu."

"Fair enough." Hiccup muttered. "So where are we going?"

"Can we explore the Yeti village?" Rapunzel called up.

"If you're fast enough to avoid them." Jack replied, settling on the globe.

"Well, why leave when we've got a little party right here?" Merida griped.

Jack raised an eyebrow. "Well...there is the matter of the giant plants taking over North's workshop." He pointed out, face deadpan.

That managed to get a small smile from Merida. "Well, if yu put it that way..." She muttered, heading for the elevator.

"Um, Merida?" Jack called. "The village is the other way..."

Merida froze. "Yu couldn't have said so earlier?"

"I assumed that you knew where it was." Jack told her defensively.  
"I'll get Punzie since she's on the wrong floor, and I certainly hope that Hiccup remembers where it is." He added as he dropped down, offering an arm to Punzie. She deflated slightly, then grabbed onto his arm.

Merida glared at Hiccup. "If yu get us lost..." She threatened.

Hiccup held his hands up. "Don't worry! I've got a good memory for locations! It's this way." He defended himself, turning to walk in what indeed was the opposite direction from where Merida had started going.

Merida looked around as the hall they were taking started to drop in temperature, then her eyes widened as Hiccup pushed open a door to reveal what almost looked like a small medieval village nestled among the icebergs and glaciers of the North Pole. She followed Hiccup across the bridge, arriving at the same time as Jack and Rapunzel.

"Where are all the Yetis?" Rapunzel asked in confusion, looking at the empty village.

Jack smirked. "Building toys in a flower-infested workshop." He then beckoned. "C'mon, I've got a good place in mind."

Merida tapped a finger on the hilt of her sword absentmindedly as they trudged down a packed trail. She blinked when Jack turned off the path, dragging his staff behind him to create a path for the rest

of them. She sped up slightly so that she was first onto the path, then caught up to Jack. "So wot's so important about this spot that yu're taking us to?"

Jack shrugged. "It's where the least amount of damage will be done while maximizing the amount of practice Punzie gets 'cause it's an abandoned part of the village. It's still safe, I'll make sure of that. Plus, it's great for setting up impromptu ambushes."

Merida chuckled and rolled her eyes. "So basically it's like a playground for you."

Jack laughed. "Yeah, pretty much!" He agreed, then looked around. "Ah." He exclaimed in satisfaction. "Here we are!"

Merida frowned. "But...there's nothin' here."

Jack ignored her and pushed against part of the glacier wall that they had come to, and to her amazement part of the ice melted away as a decrepit door swung open to allow them access to a part of the village that had obviously not seen occupants for quite some time.

As Merida stepped inside, she watched as Jack started running around, freezing beams and joints so that all the buildings were fully supported but not damaged any more than they already were.

"Had some practice with this?" Hiccup asked, scanning the area. He then pointed at a joist anchored in the glacier. "Will that hold?"

Jack flew up to inspect it. "It should, it's in there pretty good and there aren't any cracks."

Hiccup nodded, satisfied. "Ok."

Rapunzel ran to one of the buildings. "Now that we're outside, I wanna try something!" She told the group before pulling out a fine-tip brush and painting a butterfly on the side of one of the houses. To Merida's surprise, the painting suddenly fluttered its wings and flew off the house, circling Rapunzel's head a couple times before flying off.

By the time Merida had registered that the painting had flown away, Rapunzel had brought several mice and squirrels into existence.

"Hey, maybe switch to something that can fight." Jack suggested.

Rapunzel nodded, thought for a moment, then painted an eagle. She stepped back nervously when it blinked an eye at her, then relaxed as it flapped noisily to one of the support joists where it settled calmly.

"Very fierce." Merida remarked drily.

"You want it to attack us?" Hiccup pointed out, keeping an eye on the eagle.

Merida rolled her eyes then looked back to Rapunzel, who was excitedly painting what looked like a large gray mammal with a tube for a nose. "Wot is that?" She asked.

Rapunzel paused to look at Merida. "It's an elephant." She explained briefly before adding the last strokes. "You guys might wanna step back." She cautioned, taking several healthy steps backwards.

Merida immediately followed suit, watching as the painting stepped out from the wall, only to grow until it was towering over them. "So that's why yu wanted us to step back."

Jack looked at it critically. "Sandy's dreamsand dinosaurs are bigger." He decided.

Rapunzel huffed and rolled her eyes. "It wasn't a competition." She then squealed as Jack suddenly grabbed her, shoving her into Merida and Hiccup to send all of them toppling backwards. "Jack, what?"

Merida paused in her intent to chop something off of Jack when the elephant let out a roaring trumpet and thundered towards a shadowy area, the eagle screeching and following.

"You're welcome." Jack muttered. "I've seen a few of those, so I know what they look like when they're getting agitated enough to get destructive." He explained.

Merida peered at the elephant. Was that sand it was stomping on? She then froze as the elephant angrily wrapped its trunk around a support joist and pulled.

"So much for it being rooted well the the glacier." Hiccup muttered as the joist popped free, sending other supports creaking.

"In my defense, I was not evaluating it for elephant proofing." Jack retorted. "I think it might be a good idea to figure out how to stop it before it reaches the Yeti village."

"...Yeah. How are we going to do that?" Rapunzel asked. "It's gone nuts, I'm pretty sure I can't calm something like that down at this point."

Hiccup winced when the elephant flung the joist into the shadows. "While it does seem to be defending us from something, we should probably figure something out to stop the area from collapsing on us."

Jack studied the run-down buildings as one illustrated Hiccup's point and toppled to the ground, nearly taking its neighbors in the process. "I could try freezing them again." He offered. "That'll keep them from coming down, at least temporarily."

Merida stared at him. "Yu do realize how dangerous that is."

Jack stared right back. "At this point? It's that or have Hiccup try to do something which would prove even more dangerous to him since he can't fly, or we can get buried. Your choice. Just...keep them distracted, and I'll be fine. I'm hard to catch, after all, right?"

Merida rolled her eyes. "Well, no offence Rapunzel, but I think that the eagle will be the first one to go until I figure out wot the elephant's weakness is." This saying, just as the elephant trumpeted triumphantly, swinging it's tusks into another building, Merida let her arrow fly, causing the eagle to fly apart in a splatter of paint.

"...Ew." Jack muttered before flying to a support that was beginning to creak, landing on it lightly before running along it to spread frost around the weakened areas.

Merida frowned, then shot an arrow at the neck of the elephant when it reared to reach Jack. The arrow broke off, not even nicking the skin.

"Fine then." Merida muttered as the elephant turned and charged at them. There was a blue blur as Jack dove in front of the elephant, icing the ground heavily in front of the animal before grabbing the three not capable of flight and blasting them up to the top of the glacier.

"Jack?" Hiccup asked in concern as the sprite leaned against his staff, breathing heavily. He then backed up slightly when Jack shot him a small glare.

"You guys are way too heavy." Jack muttered crossly. "Almost didn't make that."

Merida rolled her eyes, then looked down at the elephant. "Um, is it supposed to do that?" She asked, pointing at the elephant that had just smashed down a section of glacier and was now pushing itself through the gap.

"We are in so much trouble." Jack muttered. "Hiccup, call the reptile."

"Dragon." Hiccup corrected automatically. "Dragons hate being called reptiles."

Jack smirked. "Good to know. Call it, please?"

Hiccup sighed, then cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted "TOOTHLESS!"

Jack winced and rubbed his ears. "A little warning next time, you're unexpectedly loud."

Merida watched the elephant in worry. "Well, the dragon had better hurry it up, the beast is still going."

Jack firmed his lips, then reached a decision. "Right. Rapunzel, hold onto Merida. I'll carry you, just don't drop Merida 'cause I probably won't be able to catch her if you do."

Merida stiffened when Rapunzel complied. "Don't worry, I've got strong arms." Rapunzel assured her.

That didn't make the take-off any better when Merida felt herself thrown upwards by the wind to hang by seemingly nothing as Jack



hovered, before tracking the large-scale destruction of outlying buildings.

"So far it hasn't reached anything important." Jack told them.  
"Rapunzel, what are the weak spots of an elephant?"

Merida blinked and listened closely. "Well, I'd imagine that with their thick skin, it would be wisest to aim for the ears or eyes." Rapunzel yelled.

Merida scanned the surrounding area, then saw a building in the path of the elephant that would suit her purposes. "Land over there!" She called to Jack.

"You better have a very good plan, frizzy." Jack sighed as he put on a burst of speed to flash past the elephant and land on the building in question.

"This." Merida growled. "And it'll happen to yu if yu don't stop callin' me that." That being said, she rapidly heated an arrow, sighted, then released the shot, watching as the arrow slammed into the eye socket. "YES!" She yelled as the elephant blew apart into about a gallon of paint, which was in part caused by the plasma blast from Toothless that hit around the same time as her arrow.

"Great. Now we don't know who gets the credit." Jack moaned, absentmindedly freezing any paint that got near them.

Merida nodded slowly, not really caring. She then turned to Rapunzel. "Well, I have an idea. How about, until you get a little more control, no more animals the size of buildings?"

Rapunzel nodded rapidly. "Yeah, definitely."

Merida groaned when Jack said, "So, who gets to tell North?"

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Well, general chaos is always good, right? I figured that Rapunzel would be able to animate animals as well since she seems to be able to communicate with and calm down certain animals. (read: Maximus)

## 25. Chapter 25: Brains vs Brawn

### Chapter 25

#### Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup rubbed his arm absently as he walked down the hall to his room. Things had been chaotic, almost more than his village. He was ready for some peace and quiet. He quietly slipped inside, shutting the wooden door before looking at the rough pine planks making up the rest of his room, with various weapons and decorations hanging on the walls.

He took down an old sword that had obviously seen its fair share of battle, as it no longer had an edge, just nicks and dulled metal. He

unwrapped the cracked leather from the hilt, watching as the tough strips crumbled away at his touch. When he held the metal in his hand, he closed his eyes and concentrated. He felt the same tingle that he had in the office, and when the tingle ended he opened his eyes.

Hiccup then nearly dropped the blade in surprise. The edge of the blade had been sharpened, yes, but the blade had also taken a new shape, lighter and thinner than most Viking swords. "What the..." Hiccup muttered.

When he hefted the sword, he was surprised to find that it seemed almost weightless. He gave the sword a few experimental swings, delighted to find that the sword seemed almost like an extension of his arm, something that his father had been trying to get him to achieve with the normal swords.

He glanced up when Astrid opened the door. "Oh...hey." She said, looking at the sword. "Where'd you get that?"

Hiccup gestured to the spot where the sword had hung. "From there. I just...changed it a little." He explained.

Astrid raised an eyebrow as she crossed over to get a better look. "Looks pretty flimsy to me." She observed skeptically.

Hiccup nodded. "Well, it's still a strong sword, it's just that the center of the sword is of a more malleable metal, with more brittle metal along the edges, from what I can see. It's not like any other sword I've seen before, even if it does look mostly like a normal sword."

Astrid nodded. "Yeah. Wanna test it out?"

Hiccup sighed. "I'd come here for peace and quiet, but I guess I should have known better." He then looked closer at Astrid. "I thought you used axes."

Astrid nodded. "I was thinking you could spar Merida, and I could save your butt if you got in trouble." She told Hiccup cheerfully.

"Your confidence is overwhelming." Hiccup said sarcastically as he found a spare lace to wrap around the hilt of the sword. "How do you know she'll even say yes?"

Astrid shrugged. "Something to do? We could all use extra training, given the fact that every fight you guys have been in has ended up in a draw. We can't do this forever, you know full well that Pitch and Gothel will be getting stronger."

Hiccup sighed and nodded before looking at the sword. "I'll have to talk to North about a scabbard, though." He muttered.

Astrid rolled her eyes and grabbed the wrist not holding a rather sharp weapon. "Later. Come on, day's wasting."

"I'm pretty sure that's not what the saying is." Hiccup pointed out as he followed Astrid to Merida's room.

He stopped talking when Astrid knocked on the door, then opened it and murmured something he couldn't catch with the noise from the Yetis in his ears. He really wasn't used to the constant noise stimulation, even in Berk there would be quiet times.

He then gave a small wave when Merida stuck her head out the door. "Yu really wanting to train?" She asked in disbelief.

Hiccup gave her a look, hefting the sword. "Nah, I'm carrying this for looks."

Merida rolled her eyes, then disappeared for a moment. She then emerged, sword belt in hand as she shut her door. "So, how much experience do yu 'ave?"

Hiccup sighed. "Technically, none, since this isn't a sword I'm used to using."

Merida nodded. "Alright, well, we'll see how yu do. Let's go."

Hiccup gave Astrid a long-suffering look before following Merida to the room she had trained in before. He was slightly amused to see frost still covering the walls in some spaces from when Jack and Merida had duked it out. He jumped slightly when Astrid shut the door firmly. "No intrusions this time." She explained, leaning against the door.

Merida nodded. "Good. Ready, Hiccup?"

Hiccup immediately whirled, sword going up defensively. He blinked when Merida backed up slightly, confusion etched on her face. "You, aren't going to attack?" He asked.

Merida nodded. "Well, yes, but wot was that reaction?"

Astrid snorted. "When a Viking asks if you're ready, it's because your back is turned and they're about to attack you. In a sparring match, of course, we don't warn in real life."

Merida giggled. "Well, then, let's go scaredy cat." She taunted.

Hiccup sighed. "It was a perfectly normal reaction, thank you." He muttered, holding his sword in a more relaxed position.

Merida smirked. "First move's up to me, then?" She asked nobody in particular, taking a tentative half step forwards before launching herself forwards, sword dropping to waist level before she slammed all her weight onto her front foot and swung upwards with the force of her body weight behind the blow.

Hiccup scampered backwards, nudging her blade upwards so that he changed the trajectory without actually taking the force of the blow. He then slid his sword down, aiming at her hand.

Merida quickly twisted her wrist, blocking with the hilt guard before pivoting to make a hilt smash at Hiccup's shoulder. Hiccup flicked his blade up, forcing Merida to move backwards. He then ran at her, raising his sword for an overhead strike. He blinked when Merida

simply gripped her hilt with both hands and took his attack full-on.

"Yu're used to heavier swords doing all the work." Merida guessed. "With a blade like yurs, it's smarter to use it's speed, not try to create strength that isn't there."

She demonstrated by locking Hiccup's blade with her hilt and twisting down sharply, causing Hiccup to yelp and drop his blade, wringing his wrist. "How did you..."

Merida shrugged. "It's a simple technique, you just trap the opponent's blade with yur hilt and then twist hard so that they have to drop the sword or risk hurting something."

"Well, that's useful against a sword." Hiccup mused, retrieving his sword. "But none of our enemies uses one."

Merida frowned. "Aye, and that's the problem. It's nearly impossible to block arrohs, and I don't know how to fight against a scythe like Pitch has got."

Hiccup sighed. "So, basically, I'm still useless in a fight."

Merida rolled her eyes. "Let's not forget the cranky, evil old witch."

"\_Witch\_." Hiccup stressed. "Swords can't block magic, not normal ones."

Merida threw up her hands. "Then yu've got Toothless, where a sword is a perfect weapon because it's long enough to do damage without endangering yur own mount!"

Hiccup nodded. "Not much I can do to practice with that, though."

"You could ask Sandy for help." Astrid suggested. "They won't be Nightmares, but close enough."

Hiccup sighed. "Can we just focus on one thing at a time?"

Merida raised an eyebrow. "Yu're the one that's complainin' constantly."

Hiccup nodded, swinging his sword irritably. "Yeah...but I still don't feel that this is going to help me be of any more help."

Merida shrugged. "It'll make yu stronger and faster, for one."

Hiccup shrugged. "I've always been more of a strategist. Hence why I'm not that great of a fighter even though I'm a Viking."

Merida smacked a fist into her palm, eyes brightening. "That's it!" She exclaimed. "We just need a way for you to learn how to analyze yur opponent while fightin', and then cook up a plan on the spot!"

Hiccup frowned. "So...you're basically saying that I should learn to watch the subtle gestures my opponent makes so that I can start clueing in to the hints that they drop and react beforehand?"

Merida nodded while shrugging. "More or less."

Hiccup sighed. "Right. Well, seeing as I only lasted a few seconds the first go 'round, that hasn't worked so well."

"Yu were reckless and forgot the weapon yu had." Merida told him dismissively.

"A sword..." Hiccup muttered.

"But one that's shaped and weighted differently from the ones you're used to." Astrid interjected. "You have to change your fighting style to depend on mobility and speed rather than your nonexistent strength."

"Gee thanks." Hiccup muttered.

"Well, for feedback, yur first move was good." Merida told him. "Yu have to fight like that, capitalizing on the fact that while yur weaker, that means that they're slower."

Hiccup nodded slowly, before sighing and raising his sword into a defensive position. "Well, might as well get this over with." He muttered.

Merida grinned. "Might as well." She agreed, before lunging forwards, thrusting her sword forwards. Hiccup rotated to the opposite side, deflected the attack, and then twirled his sword into position for a short stab. Merida jumped backwards, lashing out as she did so, forcing Hiccup to retreat as well.

"Better!" Astrid praised from the door, but Hiccup ignored her for the moment, even as he filed the fact that she had complimented his fighting away until he needed it.

Hiccup let out a small breath as he waited for Merida's next move. From what he had seen, she preferred to have space for larger movements, though if that wasn't available then she had a large arsenal of tricks to get that space back. She was a primarily aggressive fighter, not giving much thought to defense, instead preferring to go straight to the counter. As such, she'd probably be susceptible to combination attacks, though with the rapid counter it was highly risky to do so.

He was snapped out his thoughts as Merida rushed forwards again. This time, however, as she went for an overhead strike like he had done, Hiccup ducked down under the blow as he flicked it upwards before reversing his grip quickly to deliver his own strike.

His blow has jarred to a halt as Astrid grabbed him by the back of the collar, her ax stopping Merida's sword. "While this is all well and good, it's a good idea to remember the differences in level here and take it down a notch." She advised calmly.

Merida shrugged as she backed up. "He was doin' fine." She muttered rebelliously.

"Perhaps." Astrid conceded. "But I told him I would step in, and things were getting a little intense for someone with little experience."

Merida sighed. "Fine." She then looked at Hiccup. "Yu're learnin' quickly, I'm sure that yu'll be able to adjust to that weapon quickly. Now, go find something to store it in."

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah, that was the plan." He agreed, wincing as his muscles let him know that they were sore as the adrenaline rush wore off. "And then, a nap."

"I wouldn't." Astrid cautioned as they left the room. "If you don't keep moving for a while, your muscles will stiffen into a huge cramped ball of pain."

Hiccup winced at the thought. "I'll...put off the nap." He decided.

Astrid grinned. "Good, now, let's go find North."

After a few minutes of searching, Astrid got impatient, much to Hiccup's amusement, and yelled at a Yeti until they reached an equal level of exasperation and were able to communicate what they wanted.

"He's in his office." Astrid muttered, striding back to Hiccup.

"I must say, that was impressive to watch." Hiccup admitted as he led the way to North's office. "I don't think I've ever seen you have that much trouble communicating."

"Shut up." Astrid muttered, before looking up. "Oh, almost there!" She exclaimed, using a rather obvious change of subject.

"Yes, and you are wanting scabbard?" North asked, opening the door. He laughed when he watched the two teens' jaws drop. "Eh, is talent, and good information system."

Hiccup shrugged. "Fair enough." He sighed, walking into North's workshop and laying his sword on the table. "I've never seen a sword like this, what is it?"

North stroked his beard for a few moments. "Is most similar to small broadsword." He decided. "Built differently, but similar shape." He opened a door, muttering to himself as he dug through various bins. "Ah!" He proclaimed in satisfaction, picking up what looked to be a large block of wax.

He placed it on the table, and then pressed the sword down firmly into the wax, and when he lifted the sword up, there was still an impression in the wax. "Not bad, yes?"

Hiccup nodded slowly. "So...basically you'll use that as a mould for shaping the scabbard?" He asked. "I've never heard of using a method like that."

North laughed. "Is no matter!" He chuckled. "In meantime," he continued as he located a small scabbard, "this one should

work."

Hiccup slid his sword into the scabbard experimentally. "It's by no means a great fit, but yeah, shouldn't break the sword." He agreed. "How long wi-"

"Bah, you have by tomorrow!" North interrupted. "No problem."

Hiccup smiled as North shooed them out. "Well, that was productive than I'm going to admit." He told Astrid. "But aches and pains aside, I'm going to go take that nap now."

Astrid rolled her eyes. "Don't say I didn't warn you."

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Because why not. I've always enjoyed writing technical stuff like this, even if it's not totally plausible. And not to worry, big showdowns will be happening soon, I won't keep you guys waiting much longer!

## 26. Chapter 26: Snow Day!

### Chapter 26

Jack Frost

Jack sighed as he looked out the window. He had a huge urge to go out and make it snow in some places that needed it, but he knew that everyone else would be furious. Not to mention that right now going anywhere alone was suicide. He growled in the back of his throat, extremely frustrated. He turned away from the window, intent on finding someone that might go with him, because being cooped up here was driving him nuts.

As it turned out, Tooth and Sandy had gone out to do their jobs, and Jack knew that there was no way that Bunny or North would go with him. That left the three newbies. Great.

Rapunzel had been placed under extremely mild house arrest after the elephant incident, so he didn't bother asking her. Hiccup was an unlikely candidate as well, he had spent the entire morning hobbling slightly, an extremely amused Astrid in tow. That left Merida. Jack irritably froze an elf that was in his way, glancing up when he heard a familiar scoff nearby.

"Got nothin' else to do?" Merida asked, rubbing her thumb along her bow.

"Actually, I've got places to snow in, but with the situation being as it is, I'm not risking going alone. Care to see how winter's spread?" Jack invited, leaning against his staff.

Merida flashed a suspicious glance at him. "Why are yu askin' me?"

Jack shrugged. "Punzie's forbidden, Hiccup can't move, Tooth, North, and Sandy are busy, and I'm totally sure that Bunny would jump at

the chance to help me make places colder." He explained.

Merida snorted. "In that case, can't see that I could refuse. But how am I supposed to tag along?"

Jack grinned. "I figured that you'd take your horse and a couple snowglobes. Who knows, maybe we can get some people to believe in you in the meantime."

Merida nodded. "And where would these snowglobes come from?"

Jack patted his hoodie pocket, causing a slight \_clink\_ to be heard. "Got that covered."

Merida laughed. "Yu're incorrigible."

"Thank you!" Jack retorted cheerfully. "Now, shall we go before a certain Russian notices?" He added, walking towards the stables.

"Not that I'm quite sure how yu roped me into agreeing that easily." Merida said, and Jack was pretty sure she was doing that for the sake of argument. Well, if she wanted some banter, who was he to turn her down?

"I dunno, restless?" He replied, jostling her with his elbow. "Happens."

"Princesses don't get restless." Merida replied loftily.

"Princess?" Jack asked, looking around as if confused. "Where?"

Merida punched him in the arm. "Funny, Snowflake."

"Was that really necessary?" Jack griped, rubbing his arm.

"The punch or the nickname?"

"Both!"

"Yes."

Jack rolled his eyes, deigning not to answer as they reached the stable. "Kay, get saddled, then I'll pass the...contraband to you." He instructed with a sly grin.

Merida smirked despite her apparent effort to retain a straight face, and swung up into the saddle with surprising ease, considering the size of the horse.

Jack scanned the area just in case, then began passing the globes to her. "I counted, and then brought some extras. You shouldn't run out, and if you do, well, we'll cross that bridge on the less than 1% chance that occurs. Just use them wisely, as in only when I tell you to." He instructed when she had secured the snowglobes. "And don't break them." He added.

"Yes, thank you, mother." Merida sighed, tightening her grip on the reins. "Where to?"



"Well, first time, I get the honors." Jack told her. He swirled the snowglobe, then whispered, "Australia!"

"Bit of a grudge?" Merida inquired as the portal opened.

Jack shook his head. "Nah, Australia's in the Southern Hemisphere, thus, they get snow in this season, when in the Northern Hemisphere it's going away." He then ran through the portal before it could close, Merida kicking her horse into action right behind him.

Jack landed in a cool park, grinning at Merida as she came through. She looked over at him. "So, where are we goin'?"

Jack thought for a moment. "Well, besides here, New Zealand, Chile, Argentina, Peru, and Tibet." He replied, holding up a finger for each one.

"So we're here for awhile?" Merida asked in resignation.

Jack smirked. "I'll make you eat those words by the time I'm done."

"Really." Merida remarked skeptically. Jack snorted, and in the next moment he had summoned a blast of wind to rocket him high up into the air, followed immediately by a thick cloud cover and heavy snowfall.

Jack looked down to see Merida thundering down the street on her horse, dodging around the people who were scurrying away from the 'riderless' horse. He smiled when he saw a few children excitedly point at Merida, talking animatedly to their friends and parents.

Jack quickly dropped so that he was flying alongside Merida. "See? New believers already." He told her. "They probably recognized the horse from a story, and were thus able to see you."

Merida gasped, pointed at an adult. "That's great, but you'll run into that person!"

Jack sighed, lifting so that he dodged. "Say, Merida, do you know what it means to be invisible as a spirit?" He asked.

She shook her head. Jack nodded slowly, then flew ahead to land in front of a group of adults hurrying irritably through the snow. He heard Merida yelling at him, and then there was the horrid icy feeling flashing through his body as the adults walked through him obviously. He winced and put a hand to his chest, and was still gasping slightly when Merida rode up to him.

"Wot was that?" She asked in alarm. "Are you ok?"

Jack made a face. "That, is invisibility. When someone doesn't believe in us, it's like we don't exist. They can't see, hear, or touch us. And as for ok, well, it's not a pleasant feeling but I'm not harmed by it."

Merida nodded slowly. "I'm...sorry."

Jack shrugged. "Don't be, it'll happen to you to, just not right now since your horse is kinda preventing that from happening. Now, we've still got a lot of places to cover, so we should get going before someone finds us and hauls us back home."

Before Merida could respond, Jack leapt up, grabbing onto a light pole and using that to land on some power lines. "Race you to the next town, frizzy!" He yelled, running along the power lines, causing them to ice over.

"It is so on!" He heard Merida yell, and he laughed as he summoned a wind to propel him into the air, also assigning a wind to finish with the snowstorm.

As he flew along, he was surprised to hear the sound of hoofbeats growing louder. He glanced back to see Merida leaning down flat against the horse's neck, a defiant look on her face. He laughed slightly before urging the wind to drive him along faster.

Several hours later, both Guardians were at the end of their rope as Jack landed next to Merida in Tibet. "Finally." He muttered.

Merida looked up at the sky. "Well, given the amount of area covered, even if I do think that you took a long time, I'll give you that you're faster than I thought." She admitted. "Can we go back now?"

Jack nodded. "Unless you broke all the snowglobes."

Merida flashed him a dirty look, holding up a snowglobe. "Of course not." She shook it, yelled, "North Pole!" and threw the snowglobe against a tree. When the portal opened up, Jack and Merida jumped through.

Neither of them noticed the Nightmare watching them from the shadows.

When Jack stepped from the portal, Merida right behind him, the first thing he registered was being immediately fussed over by Phil.

"Phil...Phil! What?" Jack sputtered, trying to figure out what was going on with the Yeti. The Yeti garbled something at him in its language, and Jack frowned. "Pitch?"

"JACK!" He heard Tooth and North yell, and he looked over at them in confusion.

"Yeeeeeeesssss?" He replied slowly. "Am I in trouble?"

He then yelled in protest as North picked him up. "You are not hurt?" North demanded.

"No, but you're about to give me whiplash!" Jack retorted, trying to wiggle free.

His only comfort was that Merida was receiving the same treatment from Tooth.

"Why, what's the problem? All I could get from Phil with all the mother-henning was something vague about Pitch." Jack asked North as

the large Russian finally set him down.

North rubbed the back of his head. "His shadow appeared on globe when we look for you and Merida, taunted us about not keeping track and hinted that even he could keep you under tabs. Naturally we expect the worst."

Jack nodded. "Yeah, sorry, I was just worried you guys wouldn't let me go out, even though I've still got my job to do."

"And per'aps we've got a reason for that, ya gumby!" Bunny snapped irritably as he ran up. "Pitch has got a huge grudge against ya, and he's not gonna be subtle about taking it out on ya! Ya had us all worried!"

Jack held up his hands. "Ok, ok, well, I've given everywhere that needs it a good snow, so I'll be able to stay put for awhile until I'm needed somewhere else." He conceded. He then put his hands down and grinned. "But still, it's nice to know that you really do care." He added with a crooked grin.

Bunny rolled his eyes, muttered something under his breath, then hopped off. Jack ignored him, knowing that getting into an argument wouldn't be smart. He looked at Merida. "I'd suggest that you stable the horse, both it and you look about ready to fall over."

"Yu're not any better." Merida shot back before leading her horse away.

"Yeah, well at least I'm not pointing out the obvious for the sake of arguing!"

"Let's not start this!" Tooth interjected. "Both of you, get to bed, once everyone is up and ready to go tomorrow we'll start planning."

Jack planted his feet stubbornly. "No. We'll go to bed, get up, and then get out there and do something." He insisted. "I'm done waiting for Pitch to come to us whenever he feels like taunting us, let's turn the tables back on him."

"Sounds like plan!" North agreed heartily, thumping Jack on the back.

Jack staggered forwards, just barely catching himself. "Well, time to execute phase one of the plan: Get to sleep before passing out where I stand." He told North, giving a not very subtle hint.

"Of course, of course! Shoo shoo!" North bellowed, shoving Jack lightly.

Jack laughed as he took to the air, landed in front of his room, and opened the door. "Whatever Bunny says, that was fun." He muttered to himself before leaning his staff against the wall, falling onto his bed, and dropping off to sleep immediately. Tooth would be horrified.

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For those of you confused about that last line, he didn't brush his

teeth before going to bed. Yup, har-de-har. In my defense, I'm up waaayyyyy later than I should be, so my brain's not firing on all cylinders.

And this may sound repetitive at this point, but there WILL be action! The stage has been set, I think I've got everyone pretty riled up, so this should be pretty fun! Hooray for character bashing! And sleep! On that note, I shall see all of you lovely people later, at a more natural hour.

## 27. Chapter 27: Blast from the Past

### Chapter 27

Merida DunBroch

Merida blinked groggily, momentarily confused by her unfamiliar surroundings. Then the memories came crashing back in merrily and she groaned. Oh, yes, her parents would take the fact that she was now immortal very well. Leave the kingdom to the three wee devils. They were doomed.

Then her brain finally cycled to the snippets of conversation she had heard last night:

\_Get up and DO something...done waiting...turn the tables back on him!\_

\_Sounds like plan!\_

She jumped out of bed with a small whoop. "Finally, we're not hiding!" She congratulated herself as she struggled into one of her dresses, grabbed her weapons, and ran out the door. She smiled when she saw Hiccup racing to the elevator, followed closely by Rapunzel and Jack.

She put on an extra burst of speed, placing one hand on a banister to vault over it, joining the other three. "Thought yu'd get goin' without me?" She asked.

"Perish the thought!" Hiccup cried theatrically, earning laughter from Merida and Jack.

"Honestly, you guys are way too happy in the mornings." Rapunzel muttered. "And this coming from a girl who was mostly done with her chores by 7:15 in the morning."

Merida raised an eyebrow. "Aye, but a princess rises with the sun." She told Rapunzel, subconsciously echoing her mother.

She rolled her eyes when Jack flew up to a window. "Sun rose a while ago." He pointed out helpfully. "So that theory just got busted."

"It's the thought of the matter." Merida muttered, crossing her arms. "But where's everyone else?" She asked, looking around.

Jack smirked. "Well, still asleep...but I say we fix that."

Merida grinned. "Oh, the Master of Tricks has thought up a little game? Tell me, will you get yourself caught this time?"

"That was a special circumstance." Jack pouted. "And I was just going to, ah, open a few windows." He added lamely.

"And then help nature do its work?" Hiccup asked.

"Maaayyyyyybe?" Jack replied, drawing out the word comically.

Merida scuffed a foot on the floor, rolling her eyes. "Is this really all that Jack Frost can think of?" She taunted.

Jack grimaced. "I kinda don't want them mad at us right before they'll be making the decision about whether or not to let us go out?"

"Good point." Hiccup sighed dejectedly.

"...Unfortunately." Rapunzel seconded.

Merida threw her hands up. "You guys are boring." She muttered, looking up at the globe. She then froze as she saw one area of the globe begin to flicker and lose lights. "Uh...Jack? That...that's not normal, is it?"

Jack looked up at the globe, and then his eyes snapped open. "But that's...near Burgess. Burgess! Jamie!" He yelled in a panic, flying up to the globe. "Nononono! If Pitch dares lay a hand on Jamie I swear I'll ki-"

"JACK!" Merida yelled as loud as she could, which was pretty loud. "Calm down! This is exactly what he wants!"

She then whirled. "Hiccup. You go get North. Rapunzel. Start waking up the Yetis, and find out if any of the other Guardians are here."

Hiccup nodded. "And we'll need another method of communication, the Northern Lights is too obvious of a summons." He instructed before running off.

Merida nodded, then looked back up to see Jack still glaring at the globe like he was trying to melt it with his gaze. "JACK FROST, GET DOWN FROM THERE THIS INSTANT!" She bellowed, using the voice reserved for brothers up until this point. The effect it had was astronomical.

Jack let out a startled cry before dropping unceremoniously back to the floor. "What was that for?" He demanded in an injured tone.

"Just gettin' you back on this planet." Merida replied sweetly. "On the bright side, it's not like the Guardians can stop us now."

Jack wrung his hands on his staff as he looked at the lights rapidly going out. "They wouldn't be able to stop me anyways."

Merida looked up when Rapunzel skidded to a halt on a higher level. "It's just North here!" She reported. "How are we supposed to get

everyone else here?"

Jack frowned. "We won't be able to, not in time." His face suddenly cleared. "Scratch that, I've got an idea." He corrected himself excitedly. He then shot into the air. "NORTH! NORTH!" He yelled, flying up to the Russian's room.

"Yes, what is problem?" North demanded crankily, a substantially cowed Hiccup in tow.

Jack pointed at the globe. "That is! Pitch is going to attack Burgess!"

"Shostakovich..." North breathed. "He wouldn't dare."

"Well, he is, so hear me out!" Jack insisted. "Send us four out to meet him while you round up everyone else in the sleigh. That way Pitch won't realize what we're doing, and he won't know that the Guardians are assembling 'cause the Northern Lights won't have lit up!"

North stroked his beard. "Is very risky..."

"We don't have a choice! Jamie...agh, children are in danger!"

North held up a hand. "...but as you say, risks necessary. I will take sleigh, you will fight Pitch." He rumbled. "Be careful."

"No promises!" Merida called up to him. "We'll do what needs to be done!" That being said, she turned and headed towards the stables, running into Rapunzel on the way there. She wordlessly handed Rapunzel two snowglobes from her saddlebags. "To and from." She explained with a determined tone. "All of us will come back, I promise."

She smiled when Rapunzel nodded, slipping the snowglobes into her own saddlebags.

Merida swung up into Angus's saddle turning when Jack flew in with a vice grip on Hiccup's vest. "Hey, where's the lizard?" Jack inquired.

Merida rolled her eyes. "Away from these animals, idiot." She urged Angus forwards, and Jack dutifully followed her out to where Toothless was.

Once Hiccup was ready to go, they all nodded to one another. "OK." Hiccup mused. "Since neither Jack nor I have snowglobes," he paused and glanced at Jack, who was looking at him with an innocent expression, "that I know of, we'll each follow one of you through the portal since I don't know how many it can take that aren't in one vehicle."

"Ah, we'd be fine." Jack muttered.

"But also, that way nobody is alone at any point in time." Hiccup finished.

"Sounds like a plan." Merida decided. She shook her snowglobe, yelled

"Burgess", and threw it in front of her. A flash told her that Rapunzel had done the same as Angus leapt through the portal. Merida winced as she felt like she had been wrung out, but quickly recovered and fitted an arrow to the string of her bow as Angus clattered to a halt on the road.

She turned when Jack flew through the portal after her. "Why'd yu follow me?"

Jack hovered next to her. "Figured that Maximus would be less likely to be scared by the big bad dragon following at his heels." He replied.

"Fair point." Merida conceded. "One question, though, why are we here in Burgess if Pitch isn't here yet?"

Jack sighed as the portal announcing Rapunzel and Hiccup closed and both headed over. "This way, we can make sure that Burgess is safe, then head towards Pitch. He'll be expecting us to lie in wait here. I hope."

Merida straightened and shook her head. "No. The Guardians can stake out the town." She decided. "We need to get going."

She then flinched as Jack leveled a furious gaze at her. "Fine." He mumbled angrily. "But we are going to make sure that Jamie and his friends are safe first. I want them to go to the Pole where the Yetis can protect them."

Merida nodded in understanding. "Aye, good point. Well, let's not keep the wee devils waiting, we've got somebody to go beat up." Thus saying, she urged Angus down the street towards Jodie's house. While everyone went to the house of their respective believer, with Jack getting the twins as well, Merida tossed a pebble at Jodie's window.

She then waved as the girl stuck her head out. "Head ta Jamie's house, there's trouble!" She shouted up. Jodie flashed her a queer hand sign, a fist with the thumb sticking up in the air, and then disappeared. "That's...a good thing, right?" She mumbled, waiting.

She then smiled when Jodie scampered out of the house. She leaned down, offering a hand to the girl. Jodie's eyes widened slightly, then she grabbed Merida's wrist, getting swung into the saddle behind her.

"Quick question." Merida started as she nudged Angus. "Wot was that hand sign earlier?" She asked. Merida felt Jodie shift her grip to get her face out of the curly hair, and smirked despite herself.

"It's a thumb's up." Came the muffled reply. "It's a sign of encouragement or acknowledgement."

"Oh." Merida murmured. This world really was different. She then stopped Angus when they were at Jamia's front lawn. She swung off, helping Jodie down.

She looked at the children assembled in the lawn, then Jamie came

out, holding Sophie's hand and carrying the snowglobe. "Here goes nothing." He said nervously.

He shook it, whispered to it, then threw it on the ground. Merida quickly helped herd all the children through before the portal closed, letting out a relieved sigh when the portal closed safely. "Now can we go?" She asked Jack.

Jack stuck his tongue out at her. "In my defense, if we hadn't done that we would've spent the entire fight worried sick about the kids. Now we don't have to worry about them. Phil's a pro at keeping unwanted people out."

Merida sighed as she redirected Angus towards where there was a black cloud rumbling towards Burgess. "I suppose that's where we're headed?"

Hiccup looked up at the cloud with a sigh. "Given our recent luck? I'd say that's a definite yes. Let's go."

"Yah!" Merida yelled, sending Angus galloping down the road, hearing a clatter of hooves as Maximus quickly caught on and gave chase. Within minutes, they were leaving Burgess behind and heading straight for the cloud.

Suddenly, Angus let out a piercing whinny, nearly throwing Merida. "Angus! Wot's gotten into yu?" Merida demanded angrily. She froze when she heard a sharp growl. "No. There...hasn't been enough time..." She breathed.

"Enough time for what?" Rapunzel asked nervously.

"The second Mor'du." Merida replied as a shape became visible.

Her breath hitched as it rose up, towering over her as Mor'du had done not so long ago. And this time there weren't any convenient stone pillars to crush the beast with.

"Scatter!" Merida yelled, dragging the reins sharply to the left, sending Angus cantering around until she was out of reach. Maximus was dancing backwards, neighing at the bear in what seemed to be an insulting manner.

"Idiot!" Merida ground out, before nocking and firing an arrow into the bear's eye. It let out an enraged roar, and Merida's heart sank. "Shoot to kill!" She screeched. "It's lost all humanity, it's just a mindless killer now!" She rapidly snapped off several more shots before having to retreat.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Rapunzel dismount and drop to the ground. She didn't have any time to try and guess what she was doing, as she was a little busy trying not to get torn to shreds. Not a minute later, Rapunzel let out a happy shout, accompanied by a roar.

Merida looked back to see a huge white shape crash into the demon bear. She quickly rode back to Rapunzel. "Wot was that?"

Rapunzel grinned up at her. "That was a polar bear. Widely regarded as the fiercest bear, and definitely the largest of the natural



bears. I figured it was my best shot."

She then winced, and Merida turned in time to see the demon bear reduce the painting to splatters. "Well, at least yu got 'im off my back for a while." Merida offered. She blinked as she heard a high whistle, then she cursed in Scottish as the world lit up in bright blues and oranges. "Hiccup! Warn next time!"

"Listen for the whistle, genius!" Hiccup yelled back.

Merida frowned as she tried to place where the voice had come from. She caught a flash off to the left, but the next moment she was feeling a wind from behind her.

"I think I'm starting to know why the dragon's called a 'Night Fury', this is a little spooky." Rapunzel mused, watching as Toothless struck twice before disappearing again.

Merida then clapped her hands to her ears as Rapunzel let out an ear-piercing shriek. She turned to see Jack backing away quickly, hands clamped firmly over his own ears.

"Jeez, Punzie!" He griped. "Did you think I had just magically popped off the face of the Earth? 'Cause I would hope that it would be painfully obvious that there is no way that I would be in that fight with the dragon tossing fire all over the place."

Merida removed her hands from her head, shaking her head. "Yu still shouldn't 'ave snuck up on us." She chided.

Jack rolled his eyes. "Yeah, ok, whoops. How is a bear lasting against Hiccup, is what I want to know."

Merida paused. "Good question." She then blinked. "Ach! I'm going as gaffy as that witch!" She groaned. She then pulled out an arrow and kicked her heels into Angus's side.

As Angus reluctantly pelted forwards, Merida focused all her rage about the new bear being created into the arrowhead, causing it to glow a satisfying white-hot. When she was close enough, she waited until Hiccup had just struck to aim carefully, then let the arrow fly.

She tracked the shot by the glow, watching as the arrow struck the bear in the neck, doing what no other arrow had done: pierce the toughened hide of a demon bear.

It let out a pained roar of undisguised fury, but then Toothless swooped in again, and unleashed it's largest fireball yet.

Merida shielded her eyes, and when she looked up, the bear had fallen. She held her breath, then released it in an explosive whoosh when a wisp slowly formed above the bear. She smiled in relief when she saw that the spirit resembled nobody she knew before taking the form of a normal wisp and dissipating.

"We did it!" She cheered, letting out an overjoyed laugh.

Hiccup landed next to her, a goofy grin on his face. "You have no idea how good I feel right now." He told her.

Merida frowned when Jack coughed quietly. "May I remind you that while there is one down, there is still at least two to go?" He announced.

"Aye, but what is it we're up against?" Merida mused.

Jack smirked and cracked his knuckles. "Only one way to find out."

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Because honestly, demon bear or not, it was up against a dragon. Of course it was going to be a bit of a cakewalk to get rid of. The rest of this fight won't go over quite as easily, I promise!

## 28. Chapter 28: What are Friends for?

### Chapter 28

Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel took in a shaky breath as she rode alongside the other three. Her nerves were still jangling as she processed the fact that they had just gotten rid of one of the most feared beasts to exist. She looked up at the cloud that they were getting closer to, even as it billowed and spread in every direction, slowly headed for Burgess.

"Say, um, do you think that Pitch and Mo-Gothel know that we're here?" She inquired, rubbing one arm nervously.

"Probably." Jack admitted, swinging his staff idly. "But we're ready for him, right?"

Rapunzel nodded as Maximus pranced a little, letting her know that the leader of her palace guards was quite ready to go as well. She giggled slightly at that, and surprisingly, the tight feeling in her stomach eased somewhat.

Jack seemed to sense this, and donned a goofy smile. "I've got a terribly insane idea that just might work." He announced proudly. "Why not make this a game? If Pitch feeds off fear and blah de blah, let's make sure that it's pretty tough to be scared!"

Rapunzel quirked an eyebrow as Hiccup and Merida shot him queer looks. "I'm listening." She informed him, tapping her fingers lightly along the rim of her frying pan.

Jack flipped his staff up across his shoulders, draping his arms across it not unlike a scarecrow. "Well, it's hard to be scared when you're having fun, right? So let's make this fun." He suggested. "Like, competition, or something?"

Merida smirked. "Well, bets on or off, I say that I get more than you will." She challenged. "Let's see just how well you fare."

Jack snorted. "Fair dice, I'm gonna trounce you."

Hiccup sighed. "Is that all you two can ever think of?"

Jack shook his head. "Nah, though it does take up a good 90% or so."

Rapunzel rolled her eyes good naturedly. "Well, for those of us who don't need to be a competition to survive, what should we do?"

"What's wrong with a competition?" Merida protested.

"Not...all of us are born and raised to be able to fight..." Rapunzel pointed out.

Jack raised a hand slightly. "Out of all of us, I really think that Merida is the only filling that criteria. I'm what you call a natural."

Rapunzel hefted her frying pan, and Jack moved away in a less than subtle manner. "As I was saying," Rapunzel said, "we should find something that'll work for all of us."

"We...can still have the competition, right?" Jack asked in alarm.

"Not that she could technically stop it." Merida stage whispered, a mischievous look on her face.

Rapunzel shot a look at Hiccup, gesturing to the two idiots. He held his hands up, eyebrows shooting to his hairline. Rapunzel gave him the best glare she could muster, and smiled slightly when his shoulders slumped.

"Ok, ok you two." Hiccup started. "Let's get on track, we don't have the time for this." He thought for a moment, then his face brightened. "Instead of thinking of some trick to keep us entertained, let's just do it this way." He cleared his throat and raised his right hand. "I, as a Guardian of Children, vow to be as childlike as possible in order to spread as much absolute chaos and mayhem as possible."

Jack exploded in laughter. "I'm in!" He announced. "Count me in all the way!"

Merida quickly echoed her sentiments, while Rapunzel gave Hiccup a prim look and raised her right hand, copying his pledge. This caused some snickering from Jack and Merida, but Rapunzel's hand drifting towards her frying pan caused that to abate somewhat. She smirked inwardly. Being married to Eugene had definitely taught her some tricks in getting her way when she needed to.

She looked up as Jack levitated, an impish expression on his face. "Well, I don't know about you, but I'm going to go spread a little 'chaos and mayhem'." He announced before flying off. Merida was the first to react, urging Angus into action with trained reflexes. Rapunzel smiled as Maximus went from standing to galloping on his own, with no need for direction. She heard Hiccup's voice fade as Toothless took to the skies, then returned her attention to what was coming.

She saw Merida stiffen, then reach for her weapons. She took that as her cue to quickly pull out her paints and a mid-sized paintbrush. She heard Maximus give her a concerned whinny but she gave his neck a reassuring pat. She urged him closer to a boulder, then quickly dipped her brush into some green paint, pushing the brush against the boulder right before Maximus flashed past it. But she had been quick enough.

A green line was now trailing alongside her, and with a grin and a tingle in her fingers, that line turned into a thorny vine that she quickly used the brush to whip around Maximus, taking out a swarm of Nightmares. Maximus skidded to a halt, and Rapunzel jumped off.

She dipped her brush into the yellow paint, and began creating lions that leapt out of their paintings and onto the Nightmares. When they began getting a little close for comfort, she handed Maximus his sword, which he clamped between his teeth before neighing a challenge to the Nightmares. Rapunzel hefted her frying pan, then charged forwards, bashing the Nightmares right and left, Maximus quickly moving to support her as she clumsily thinned the ranks.

She froze when she heard a voice. "Wait a minute...\_Rapunzel\_?"

She gasped and whirled, frying pan going to an offensive position. Pitch was standing there giving her a look bordering between amusement and utter confusion.

He bared his teeth. "And what brings you here, when you're powerless?"

Rapunzel smirked, then straightened. "My oath."

Pitch furrowed his brows, causing Rapunzel to notice that he didn't actually have any eyebrows. Now, \_that\_ was a story she wanted to hear.

"Your...oath." He echoed.

Rapunzel nodded. "Yup. I, as a Guardian of Children, vow to be as childlike as possible in order to spread as much absolute chaos and mayhem as possible." She repeated, giving Pitch a smug look. She then calmly dipped her brush into green paint, placed it on the ground, before flicking her wrist violently, splattering paint all over Pitch.

He scoffed. "And what was that supposed to..." He began, but faltered at Rapunzel's smirk.

She held up two fingers. "Two things. One, it's spreading mayhem, like I said. Two, I am definitely \_not\_ powerless." She informed him as her feet tingled, the paint cracking and suddenly forming into a Venus Flytrap that proceeded to clamp down on Pitch before shooting up into the sky.

She then squealed when Jack's voice came from behind her, "Remind me not to get on your bad side."

She turned to see him looking up at where Pitch had gone, jaw hanging down slightly. "Well, solemn oath and all." She pointed out. She then smirked. "Oh, yeah. Don't get on my bad side."

Jack rolled his eyes. He then paused, looking thoughtful. "You know, we do that a lot."

"Do what?" Rapunzel echoed, confused.

"Roll our eyes." Jack replied.

"Really?" Rapunzel sighed, giving an eye roll.

"See?" Jack cried, pointing at her accusingly. "Just like that!"

Rapunzel sighed, shaking her head. "While I can't argue with the fact that you're right, there are definitely more important things to be focusing on right now."

Jack looked up and sighed. "Like the fact that you just made Pitch really mad?"

Rapunzel looked up to see a deluge of green. "Eep."

Jack yelled, swinging his staff to send icy energy blasting at the paint, freezing it solid and rocketing it away from the two of them.

Rapunzel cringed when she saw a tendril of black move slightly before freezing solid. "Oh, that is so gross." She whined.

"More important things to dwell on, right?" Jack asked as he edged away.

Rapunzel sighed and nodded. "Where are..."

Jack held up a hand to cut her off. "They're fine. If you want, I'll take you to them, I just don't think we should discuss locations when there could be anyone around."

Rapunzel nodded. She whistled softly, and Maximus dutifully trotted over so that she could clamber into the saddle. Once she was situated, Jack jumped up and started flying low to the ground to lead Maximus, at times running just like he had in the ravine. She blinked when she realized that had only been a few days ago, even though it seemed like months.

"You okay there, Punzie?" Jack's voice queried, breaking her from her reverie.

She nodded. "Yeah, just, lost in thought."

Jack smiled. "Need me to send in a search party?"

Rapunzel shook her head. "Nah, I let my mind wander all the time."

Jack snickered. "But does it ever come back?"

Rapunzel and Maximus shared a look, then both turned their gazes to Jack.

"...Whoops." Jack muttered before zipping up to an unreachable height.

"You have to come down sometime." Rapunzel threatened before looking around. "And I don't see them."

She shivered as a cold breeze blew across her back, signalling Jack's change of direction. "They're close."

Maximus wheeled off to the right, following Jack, and soon Rapunzel saw evidence of Merida and Hiccup, like large, smoking craters in the ground and arrows that almost passed all the way through rather thick boulders.

"I think we're behind on our oath." Rapunzel muttered, taking in the carnage.

"Not for long!" Jack warned, and Rapunzel looked up to see a mass of Nightmares.

"...Found them." Rapunzel offered weakly as Maximus slowed allowing her to dismount while Jack flew straight into the battle, rapidly freezing the opponents solid.

Rapunzel looked up, cringed when she saw the avian shaped Nightmares, and quickly painted her own eagles and falcons and owls to take to the air with ear-rending screeches to tear into the Nightmares above.

Rapunzel waved cheekily when several incredulous glances turned her way, then she watched them subconsciously take a step back when a positively evil grin twisted itself onto her normally innocent face. "Chaos and mayhem, right?" She inquired sweetly.

Before anyone could process the situation enough to stop her, she bent down and painted an elephant.

"Oh, no." Merida groaned.

Rapunzel stayed put until the tingles subsided, then she turned and sprinted towards the others. "Go, go, go!" She urged.

They didn't need to be told twice, scattering and taking cover as the elephant trumpeted in rage before proceeding to lay waste to the immediate vicinity.

When she hunkered down next to Jack, she was surprised to see him grin at Merida.

"So, how many?"

Merida puffed her chest out slightly in pride. "Forty two."

Jack let out a soft whoop. "I'm at forty three!"

Merida's eyes widened, and then faster than a snake she nocked and shot an arrow that hissed past Jack's head.

"The heck, frizzy!" Jack yelped, dropping out of the line of fire.

Merida pointed behind him. "Forty three."

Rapunzel turned to see ice-laden sand collapse, Merida's arrow clattering to the ground. Jack sighed, before looking at Merida.

"It was already dead!"

"But it was still twitchin!"

"Because my ICE, was FLASH FREEZING IT'S NERVOUS SYSTEM!" Jack yelled.

"SHHHHH!" Hiccup and Rapunzel hissed at the same time. Rapunzel peered at the elephant, then let out a breath when she realised that it somehow hadn't heard them.

Jack looked suitably abashed, though Merida still looked livid. Rapunzel then paled when she checked again to see the elephant glaring at them. "Um, guys?"

Her words were followed by another mad rush as they all scattered before they could be crushed. With a muffled curse, Merida dashed forwards, dodged a tuck swipe by the elephant, then latched onto said tusk, transferring to the trunk when it tried to strike her, and then when it tried to fling her off, she used the momentum to land on her head. She then calmly drew three arrows, heated them, and then firing them into the back of the skull, right where the spinal cord met the brain stem.

When the elephant's legs buckled, she quickly slid down the trunk to land in front of everyone else with a triumphant smirk.

"...That still only counts as one!" Jack announced, finding his voice first.

"Placing us at a tie." Merida shot back.

Jack smirked and twirled his staff. "Not for long."

With that, Rapunzel and Hiccup were snapped out of their utter shock, and with bemused glances at each other they set back to work, listening as Merida and Jack would occasionally shout their current total at each other.

With the fierce competition, they demolished the last of the Nightmares in under ten minutes. Rapunzel sagged against a rock, exhausted.

"So, how many did yu get?" Merida asked, examining her bow. "My tally comes in at... seventy eight."

Jack raised his eyebrows, leaning back from his previous slouched position. "Well, seventy eight! Not bad, for the spirit princess of DunBroch!"

Merida's eyebrows scrunched together as she looked at Jack, and her mouth opened slightly to tell him off.

Jack, seeing this, continued. "I myself am sitting pretty

on...\_eighty\_."

"Uff!" Merida groaned, leaning her head back. "I can't win!"

"Better luck next time?" Jack offered.

"Yu won't stand a chance."

The bickering died suddenly when they heard a heavy footstep. A \_very\_ heavy footstep.

"Well! I thought you'd never quiet down!" A cheery voice announced.

Rapunzel shot to her feet and whirled, frying pan going up.  
"YOU!"

Mother Gothel chuckled and studied her fingernails. "What, did you really think I wouldn't find you? And who do I find you with?"

Rapunzel glared. "My friends."

Mother Gothel gave her a pitying look. "Yes, dear, the scrawny Viking, the outcast Spirit, and the selfish Scot, all protecting the powerless little you. I'm so proud."

Rapunzel stiffened when she heard a pained gasp from someone, and she felt rage well up inside. Without warning, Rapunzel lunged forwards, bringing her frying pan in a murderous arc towards the older woman. "Take it all back, RIGHT NOW!" She screeched in fury. "YOU! WILL! NOT! INSULT! THEM!"

An invisible force suddenly knocked her backwards, making her drop the pan in surprise. She looked up to see Mother Gothel holding her hand up like commanding a dog to 'stay'. "Didn't you know, darling? I am a witch..."

Rapunzel felt a cold hand on her shoulder. "But not the only one with magic." Jack retorted, squeezing Rapunzel's shoulder.

She then felt a warm presence on her other side. "Care to try your luck with the stubborn Princess, the immortal Guardian, and the genius Dragon Trainer; who are all good friends with the extremely powerful Future Queen that you've insulted far too many times?" Merida threatened.

"Or do you only deal with the opponents that are down for the count?" Hiccup taunted.

Rapunzel felt like she could burst with elation as she stared down the woman she had called mother. "Your move, \_Gothel\_."

Mother Gothel smiled coldly. "Oh, I know."

Rapunzel frowned when the large footsteps sounded again, and the clouds lifted to reveal the largest dragon she had ever seen in her entire life towering over her.

"You...it can't be." Hiccup muttered.



Mother Gothel laughed. "Oh, come now, it's not like that one could have been the only one in existence! And I just enslaved this one to my will, no biggie! I believe this is...what is the popular saying? \_Game over\_. Ta-ta!" She crowed before flipping her cloak up and around, vanishing into a puff of fog.

"H-Hiccup?" Rapunzel asked nervously. "What is that?"

"That...is the Red Death, probably the dragon we know the least about, the hardest to beat, and the one with almost no weaknesses." Hiccup replied. "We're in trouble."

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Well, I don't know about you guys, but I'm pretty excited about this. Oh, and cookie points for whoever can tell me how many Lord of the Rings references between Legolas and Gimli I sneaked in there. Don't worry, they're pretty much verbatim with appropriate modifications. In light of that, I WOULD BE THE HAPPIEST PERSON ALIVE IF I OWNED LOTR BUT I DON'T ALL CREDIT GOES TO TOLKEIN AND THE WONDERFUL MOVIE MAKERS FOR THE SCENES I USED!

There. The next chapter should be pretty fun, too.

## 29. Chapter 29: What's gonna work

### Chapter 29

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup looked over at Toothless, who was shifting on his haunches in a mixture of excitement and nervousness.

He patted Toothless's nose with a sigh. "We'll be fine, buddy." He promised.

"So, what's the biggest problem with this guy?" Jack inquired, looking as if he was forcing himself to not flee.

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "Well, that would be a toss-up between the huge teeth and powerful jaw, the spiked club tail, and the thirty second fire blast."

Jack paled more than Hiccup though possible. "Well, I hope you won't fault me if I sit this one out, right? I mean..."

Hiccup grinned. "Yup. You and Rapunzel stay here, there's not much you two can do against this. Merida, stay hidden and out of sight, but see if you can't get your arrows to pierce his scales. Toothless and I will take him head-on."

"Wait." Jack interjected as Hiccup climbed into the saddle. "I-I can still help."

Before Hiccup could say anything to the contrary, Jack knelt down and placed his staff on Toothless's artificial tail fin. When there was a thick coating of frost, Jack stood.

"Kay, see if it still moves." He instructed, and Hiccup obeyed, delighted to see that the fin still moved freely. He looked at Jack questioningly, and Jack smirked. "It's a common practice in chemistry, if you're gonna handle fire, dip your hands in water. That way the fire evaporates the water instead of burning you. Same deal here, the fire blasts will eventually melt the frost, and then the water will seep into the fabric, giving double protection. I don't know how long it'll last, but you'll be safer than otherwise."

Hiccup nodded slowly. "That makes sense. Thanks, Jack." He then let out a breath. "Ready to fly, Toothless?"

Toothless responded with a happy roar as he took to the skies.

"Well, first we should get his attention, yeah?" Hiccup commented. Toothless waited, then shot a plasma blast at the Red Death's face. It let out an earth-shattering roar and snapped at Toothless, but the Night Fury was already out of range and wheeling around to shoot a plasma blast at the wings of the Red Death.

To Hiccup's surprise, the Red Death stayed firmly planted, instead raising it's head and unleashing one of it's firestorms, whipping it's head around ferociously. Toothless flew steeply upwards, escaping the attack.

Unbidden, Gothel's words came back to Hiccup, \_ And I just enslaved this one to my will, no biggie! \_ Hiccup frowned as he directed Toothless away from the fight. If Gothel was controlling it, she had to be nearby in order to know what to do. Looked like Jack could have a use after all.

He clicked his foot against the pedal, bringing the startled Toothless into a dive. He landed next to Jack, holding up a hand to forestall comments.

"Jack, Rapunzel, you two have to find Gothel. Distract her, break her concentration. She's controlling the Red Death, which has to take quite a bit of willpower. If you can distract her well enough, the spell should lose it's power, especially if I'm fighting it, keeping her stretched thin." Hiccup commanded. He grinned when Jack saluted lazily, then Toothless took off again, eager to get back to the fight.

Hiccup adjusted the pedal so that Toothless banked in a wide arc around the Red Death before firing another plasma blast at its wings. If he could remove its ability to fly, he'd have a definite advantage. For now it seemed that Gothel was unable or uncomfortable to extend her control to flight, something she hadn't ever had experience in controlling. Hiccup took that as a mixed blessing and continued his assault.

It seemed like hours had passed, though Hiccup knew it couldn't have exceeded fifteen minutes, but the Red Death suddenly lost interest in the fact that it was slowly being bludgeoned into submission and took off running towards an outcropping of rocks.

Hiccup didn't comprehend what was going on for a few moments, then his heart leapt to his throat and he slammed the pedal into the

position that would send Toothless hurtling after the Red Death. It must not have been very happy to be enslaved, and would likely want revenge on Gothel. The only problem was that Jack was probably still there as well.

Toothless caught onto Hiccup's urgency, and beat his wings faster until they were a blur. They were quickly gaining ground, and Hiccup's face paled when he saw Jack tussling with a furious Gothel. The sound of the Red Death made them both look up, and Hiccup was pretty sure Jack uttered something that no child should know the definition of.

Jack had just made to fly off when the Red Death opened its mouth and unleashed a firestorm straight at the pair.

Hiccup yelled in horror, then gritted his teeth and guided Toothless in a sharp bank around. He saw Gothel attempting to reinstate control over the Red Death, but a quick plasma blast that shattered the boulder above her head quickly put that to a halt. Hiccup finally spotted Jack, frantically throwing up walls of ice as he tried to evade the flames.

"Well, looks like he's not totally crazy after all, that's actually working." Hiccup muttered before sending Toothless wheeling around. Jack would last, but a good first move would be getting the Red Death to stop trying to melt him.

Toothless brazenly fired a plasma blast straight into the face of the Red Death, and Hiccup blinked as all six eyes fixed an enraged glare at him. Hiccup gave a shaky smile to the Red Death, before being carried high into the air by Toothless as the Red Death spread its own wings.

"Oh, come on." Hiccup complained. He then blinked when several small glowing pinpoints punctured through the wings in key places.

Oh, yeah. Merida was on task with the big bad, too.

Hiccup's attention was jolted back to the scene at hand when Toothless narrowly avoided getting caught by the crushing jaws of the Red Death. "Sorry, bud!" Hiccup yelled. "Paying more attention now!" He took a steadying breath. "Let's disappear!"

Toothless rumbled happily below him before diving into a cloud, banking upwards violently, and surfacing above the Red Death. Toothless blasted the wings of the Red Death again, and Hiccup winced when he heard a sickening snap ring out. The Red Death bellowed, crashing to the ground before opening its mouth wide, green gas collecting.

"Too easy." Hiccup muttered. Toothless rumbled in agreement before unleashing a plasma blast straight into the gas. The Red Death snapped its mouth shut with a confused look before the world flashed red as it exploded.

"Yeah!" Hiccup cheered, though his triumph drained when a sobering thought struck. "I just really hope nobody was caught in that. Toothless!"

Toothless quickly landed, and Hiccup was relieved to see Merida pop

up from behind a boulder, Rapunzel following her. Hiccup's smile faded when Jack didn't appear.

Hiccup groaned and leaned against Toothless. "Of all the ones here, it had to be Jack." He muttered darkly. He then registered a sharp hiss of someone in pain, and looked up to see Gothel holding a slightly singed Jack by the hair, a gleaming knife pressed against his throat. His arms were twisted painfully behind him and held secure by the arm of the hand clenched in his hair. His staff was nowhere in sight, and Hiccup could tell he was fighting to stay awake. Well, this situation just got a whole lot worse.

"Playtime's over, children." She informed them darkly. "Now, everyone move nice and slow, wouldn't want to startle me now, would you?"

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "Considering that you haven't told us what you want, those comments are kinda unnecessary."

Gothel chuckled. "It's quite simple, really. I don't like being proved wrong, but let's see if you can do it again. I said that this boy here is an outcast. Well, let's make a deal. If he isn't an outcast, if he does mean something to all of you three, then surely you won't have a problem with a little trade."

"Wot terms?" Merida asked. "Hardly fair of yu to ask us to agree to something without telling us the stakes."

Gothel shook her head. "Well, my end of the bargain is obviously his life, so I don't know why you care about the condition so much, unless he doesn't actually matter." When Jack made a slight sound of protest, Gothel jerked the hand holding his hair cruelly. Hiccup watched, frozen, as a small line of red appeared; a result of Jack trying to twist away before remembering the circumstances.

"If the condition is something that ends up with us losing both something of ours and him, then there isn't any progress, is there?" Merida continued doggedly, refusing to meet Jack's gaze. "Wot do yu want?"

Gothel pondered for a moment. "Well, any number of things would do. Perhaps, hand over Rapunzel, or hand over the dragon, or even your pretty bow would do." She sighed. "Hmmmm. Yes. Alright, I'll release him if the Viking gives me the dragon."

Hiccup felt his blood turn to ice. He hadn't heard correctly. That's what happened. "E-excuse me?" He asked.

Gothel chuckled. "Simple. Either you surrender the dragon, or Frosty here gets it."

Jack blinked, breaking free from what Hiccup realised was a silent conversation with someone, and rolled his eyes. "What is it with that nickname?" He sighed dramatically.

"Silence!" Gothel spat, jerking on his hair again. She then glared at Hiccup. "What will it be, Viking, must I say it again? You have ten seconds to decide, then I declare this agreement void and he dies." She growled.

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Well, didn't think that I'd actually leave it here, but, well, meh. I'm in a mood for playing mind games. And, before you all hunt me down mercilessly, this whole hostage/standown situation was actually requested quite some time back by someone, so it's not \_technically\_ my fault. Even though I did write it.

And, yes, I will upload the next chapter as quickly as I can, I wouldn't do this to you guys otherwise.

## 30. Chapter 30: Teamwork!

### Chapter 30

Jack Frost

\*\_FLASHBACK\_\*

\_"Jack, Rapunzel, you two have to find Gothel. Distract her, break her concentration. She's controlling the Red Death, which has to take quite a bit of willpower. If you can distract her well enough, the spell should lose it's power, especially if I'm fighting it, keeping her stretched thin." Hiccup commanded. He grinned when Jack saluted lazily, then Toothless took off again, eager to get back to the fight.\_

Once Hiccup was back in the sky, Jack looked over at Rapunzel, taking in the fact that she was pretty much frozen, and sighed. "Ok, Punzie, tell you what. How about you go keep Merida company, make sure that she's alright." Jack suggested.

Rapunzel flashed him a grateful look and ran off. Jack let out a breath and cracked his knuckles before flying around low to the ground. He spotted a large outcropping of rocks, and figured that was a good place to start.

Jack smirked when he caught a flash of color among the rocks, and landed silently before padding with all his considerable stealth towards his new target. He slowly clambered up onto the rocks, smirking when he saw Gothel sitting primly, concentrating fiercely.

Without further ado, Jack summoned a large amount of snow and gleefully dumped it all on her head. When she let out a furious squawk, Jack flipped over her, landed, and nailed her straight in the face with a snowball. One minus his fun-giving magic, of course, he didn't want to see what her version of fun was.

Gothel finally cleaned all the snow off her face, and her enraged expression was all Jack needed to see to know that he had broken her hold on the Red Death.

\_It seemed like hours had passed, though Hiccup knew it couldn't have exceeded fifteen minutes, but the Red Death suddenly lost interest in the fact that it was slowly being bludgeoned into submission and took off running towards an outcropping of rocks.\_

\_Hiccup didn't comprehend what was going on for a few moments, then

his heart leapt to his throat and he slammed the pedal into the position that would send Toothless hurtling after the Red Death. It must not have been very happy to be enslaved, and would likely want revenge on Gothel. The only problem was that Jack was probably still there as well.\_

"Whoops." Jack commented cheerfully. "Totally my bad there."

Gothel hissed at him, lunging forwards faster than he thought possible. Jack swiped his staff upwards to keep her at bay, but Gothel grabbed onto his staff with a vice grip and tried to wrench it from his grip.

"What, you think that's the first time someone's tried that?" Jack inquired scathingly before twisting the staff violently and slamming his weight down so that Gothel was forced to let go to avoid breaking something.

A thunderous footstep captured both their attentions, and as Jack looked up to see the Red Death with Hiccup in pursuit, he cursed like the sailors he had picked up the slight habit from. He saw a queer green gas forming, and decided not to take his bets and summoned a wind to propel him out of there.

A shock wave knocked him back down to the ground as the Red Death emitted a veritable wall of fire straight towards him. He quickly flicked his staff upwards, creating a solid wall of ice between himself and the flames. When that started melting, Jack rapidly backed away, creating another one. A high whistle made him jump, and he turned in time to see Gothel nearly get her head taken off by a fire blast from Hiccup's dragon.

Searing heat brought his attention back to his own predicament, and Jack hurriedly moved sideways, throwing up as many walls as he could, sighing when there was a small respite from the heat.

\_Toothless brazenly fired a plasma blast straight into the face of the Red Death, and Hiccup blinked as all six eyes fixed an enraged glare at him. Hiccup gave a shaky smile to the Red Death, before being carried high into the air by Toothless as the Red Death spread its own wings.\_

When the Red Death turned on its new quarry, Jack leaned against his staff in relief. That had been uncomfortably close. Jack cast a glance over at Gothel, and sighed when he saw her giving him a rather nasty glare.

"...Hi?" Jack offered, giving a lazy smirk. He then gripped his staff in a defensive position when he practically saw the malignant energy radiating off Gothel.

Gothel moved to perform an arm motion, and Jack preemptively struck, firing an ice bolt that froze her to one of the rocks.

\_The Red Death snapped its mouth shut with a confused look before the world flashed red as it exploded.\_

Jack looked up in alarm as he felt another wave of heat. "Oh, no..." He muttered, before turning and running as fast as he could. He heard Gothel's shouts as the ice was melted, and then he felt an invisible

force strike him from behind. He sprawled forwards with a grunt, staff flying from his hands and under a narrow gap. "No!"

He looked back to see Gothel tuck herself between some boulders with a triumphant glance in his direction before pulling her cloak around her.

With seconds to think up a plan, Jack summoned as much ice as he could without his staff, forming a cocoon over himself to try and protect himself from the explosion.

Several agonizing moments ticked by, and then Jack felt moisture. He indulged himself in another round of swearing as the cocoon was melted and he was left defenseless against the flames.

\_Hiccup groaned and leaned against Toothless. "Of all the ones here, it had to be Jack." He muttered darkly.\_

When the flames died down, Jack was facedown in the dirt, having flipped himself over in order to protect his front. He felt the horrid feeling that let him know that he was highly likely to be burned. He started to rise, hearing the voices of his friends, but then hissed sharply as his arms were twisted violently behind him as he was dragged up by his hair.

Any move Jack would have made to free himself was quickly forestalled when he felt the presence of something sharp against his neck. Well, this was bad. To top it off, his body was choosing now to the time to start wanting to take a little break and recover from the heat.

He looked over to see his friends looking at him with stricken faces. When Gothel started bargaining, he felt dread fill him, turning his blood cold. Well, cold\_er\_. He focused on that, and when Gothel mentioned the bargain again, he tried to articulate a protest to stop his friends. His reward was searing pain as Gothel yanked on his hair, and soon after that he felt a flash of fear as his nerves registered the dagger nicking him.

\_This is bad this is really really bad, whatdoIdoIhavetostopthis!\_ He thought to himself, beginning to panic.

He then opened his eyes, making eye contact with Rapunzel. Well, here goes nothing. He stared at her, then dropped his gaze to her belt. Her face clouded, but then she slowly drew a paintbrush. Jack smiled slightly at her, then glanced at the ground before flicking his gaze upwards to Gothel's wrist. Rapunzel paled when she realised what he wanted her to do, and started to shake her head slowly.

\_ARE YOU KIDDING THERE ISN'T ANY OTHER OPTION!\_ Jack screamed at her mentally, and somehow he must have gotten the message across because Rapunzel flinched but started to reach a shaking hand for her paints.

He then caught a snippet of conversation, "Simple. Either you surrender the dragon, or Frosty here gets it." Great. So either he dies, or they hand over Toothless so that Gothel can enslave that dragon instead, ending up with all of them likely dying. Real great bargain.

He decided to try and distract Gothel, and gave a dramatic sigh.

"What is it with that nickname?" He demanded with an eye roll. He was rewarded by another painful yank of his hair, and then he heard Gothel laying down a time limit.

\*END FLASHBACK\*

Jack looked over at Rapunzel, giving her a clear message: \_Now or never.\_

She nodded, then dropped down, slamming her brush against the ground. Jack felt Gothel twitch slightly with surprise, and he took that opportunity to bash his head backwards as hard as he could, colliding painfully with something hard.

He felt Gothel's grip relax somewhat, and he was able to get some distance between himself and the knife as paint landed on Gothel's wrist, instantly turning into a vine wrapped around her wrist, pulling the knife forcibly away. Well, with that out of the way, Jack was free to, well, free himself.

He ignored his arms momentarily, letting his knees go limp so that Gothel was suddenly supporting his full weight. When her grip loosened, he did what he did best, wriggling out of the hold before dropping low to the ground and leaping to the side to get himself out of the danger zone.

Before Gothel could advance, Merida was on her, swinging her sword in violent arcs while screaming Scottish insults at her. Jack saw the opportunity and dashed over to where he had seen his staff disappear. He laid down flat on the ground, scrabbling under the rock. He yelled in triumph when his fingers curled over it, and he pulled it out with a grin, glad to see it was unharmed.

He looked back to see Gothel about to use whatever trick she had used on him, so Jack leapt into the air, yelling in rage before shooting a massive onslaught of ice at her.

Gothel was forced to use the spell to protect herself from the ice, but Jack had already landed and was dashing forwards in the attack again. He saw Rapunzel put her brush to the ground again, and turned to the side so that Gothel's back was to Rapunzel.

He grinned at Gothel, backing up slightly to keep her attention. "So, guess I'm not an outcast after all." He informed her smugly. "We handled that pretty well."

His eyes then bugged slightly when Rapunzel marched straight up to Gothel and nonchalantly painted a flower right next to her feet.

Before Gothel could retaliate, Merida was there, keeping Gothel at swordpoint, her blade glowing red. When Rapunzel shot her a look and backed up, Jack grabbed Merida by the collar and yanked her backwards. The next minute, thorny vines sprung out of the ground, wrapping around Gothel.

Jack cast a worried look at Rapunzel, but her mouth was set in a determined line.

"This is my fight, Jack." She told him. "Merida and Hiccup both



defeated their problems, and I'm done running."

Jack nodded slowly, holding an arm in front of Merida as she tried to stop Rapunzel anyways. He looked over at her, shaking his head. "She's right." He mumbled. "This is something she has to do for herself, otherwise she'll never really get over this."

Merida nodded, closing her eyes. Jack sighed and did the same, and he could have sworn he heard Rapunzel thank them before Gothel's screech filled the air. After silence had reigned for a few moments, Jack opened his eyes to see dust sifting through the thorns.

"O...kay, that's a little strange." He muttered. Rapunzel chuckled, though he could see her shaking from where he was standing.

"That your first time in an actual fight?" He asked as he came over and knelt down by her, wincing slightly as his burns told him to quit moving already.

Rapunzel caught his brief look of pain, and looked at him closer. "Are...you alright?" She asked nervously.

Jack realised that she was looking for something to distract her and shook his head. "Gothel...hit me with some spell when the Red Death, ah, blew up, and I lost my staff. So I couldn't really protect myself from the heat. But, I mean, it could be worse, I guess."

Rapunzel's eyes grew worried. "But you're in pain."

Jack nodded. "Yup. Winter sprite, covered in burns. Not supposed to go together."

Rapunzel touched his hand, where a particularly angry red burn was appearing. Jack winced, then relaxed. "You know, your hands are pretty cold." He remarked. "You ok? Not that I'm complaining, the cold feels nice on the burn."

Rapunzel sighed. "Just...a lot of stuff going on, I guess." She sighed, looking down. "But now you're hurt, and I can't..."

"Not that it was ever proved." Jack sighed. "I still maintain the opinion that your hair was just the temporary conduit."

Rapunzel sighed, giving him a look. "Hence why I'm a brunette." She pointed out, sarcasm lacing her tone. She looked down at her hand, still covering his burn. "\_Heal what has been hurt\_." She mumbled, almost as if in a trance.

She almost tumbled backwards when her hand emitted a soft gold light that seemed to seep into Jack's hand.

"Hey, I'm weirded out too, it's ok." Jack reassured her, watching as gold light started appearing all over the place, wherever he had been burned. When the patches of light dimmed and then disappeared, Jack patted himself down experimentally. "Ha! Not bad, Punzie, and may I say that I totally called that!" He cheered, jumping up to demonstrate that he had been completely healed.

Rapunzel's eyes strayed to his neck, then she assumed an extremely relieved expression. "Guess you did, you've got a clean bill of

health."

Jack felt where the dagger had nicked him, and was pleased to feel that no trace of the cut remained. "Yup, not bad if I do say so myself."

He looked up when Merida and Hiccup came over. "Wot was that little light show all about?" Merida inquired.

Jack held his arms out in a 'ta-da' gesture. "Punzie's still got the healing touch!" He announced. Merida squealed and tackle hugged Rapunzel, while Hiccup settled for giving her a high-five once Merida had gotten herself back under control.

Jack smiled at his friends. "Well, while this is all well and good, I think I'll have to point out that while we're three quarters of the way there, this next fight will be the worst one out of all the ones we've had."

He then gave them a crooked grin. "What are we waiting for?"

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AAAAHHHHHHH I'M SO SO SORRY GUYS! I was going to update this, like, seven hourse ago but my internet decided to troll me and crashed. I'm only just now able to update this, don't hate me please!

At least this 'cliffhanger' doesn't involve someone's life on the line, right?

### 31. Chapter 31: Capture

\*\*A/N: Gah, SO sorry for the delay, I've been gone with no way to get to a computer much less here, so I haven't been able to type a whole lot. So, yup, double apology, you got stuck with a long wait and now a short chapter. There shall be more coming, and longer chapters. Promise. Though life's pretty hectic so updates might still be a little slower than usual until life's normal again.\*\*

\*\*XXXXXXXXXX\*\*

#### Chapter 31

Merida DunBroch

Merida smiled happily as the four of them sat in a circle of sorts to discuss the battle plan. Of course, all of them were in strict disagreement, but the air was light with triumph. Her smile faded, though, as she realized that the environment could rapidly disappear if they didn't get their act together in time to face Pitch.

"...wait for them." Hiccup was insisting when her attention returned to the argument. "The other times we've gone against Pitch, we didn't stand a chance!"

"And we've also gotten so much stronger!" Jack countered. "Plus, we

simply don't have the time. It's now or never, cause right now we can bottle Pitch up where he can't hurt anybody. If we wait, the battle might start affecting a town, which will put countless people in danger. I say we go after him now."

"Why not send two teams?" Rapunzel suggested in a tone that suggested she had aired the same point several times before and had been overlooked.

Merida saw the same thing about to happen again and jumped into the argument. "We can't." She told Rapunzel. "Especially if we're not waitin' for the Guardians, we don't have the strength to split up, especially when Pitch has doubtless been gettin' stronger."

Rapunzel nodded slowly, a small pout forming. "Yeah, I guess, but the delay of the Guardians is making me really uncomfortable. They should be here by now!"

Jack rolled his eyes. "Unless Bunny's making a fuss about the sleigh again."

"He wouldn't, not with the situation as it is." Hiccup rebutted.

"Then what?" Jack insisted. "Pitch is right there!" He pointed at the clouds impatiently.

A chill settled over Merida. "Is he, though." She said flatly.

It was as if time had stopped. Then, slowly, three pairs of eyes came to rest on her. "You don't mean to say...we came out here for nothing?" Rapunzel asked finally.

"Oh, no. You four are much too interesting for that." A dry comment came from the left.

Everyone whirled to see Pitch leaning against a rock, inspecting his fingernails.

"Where are they?" Jack demanded, hands tightening around his staff.

Pitch rolled his eyes. "Still holed up and unaware that you four once again snuck out. Or they're finally figuring it out. Either way, \_they're too late for you\_."

He was interrupted by a high-pitched battle cry, followed by a gleam of metal. Pitch disappeared into the shadows as an axe clanged off the rock.

Merida grinned when Astrid strolled over and picked up the axe, running a thumb over the edge to check for notches. She then walked over to Hiccup and slugged him in the arm. As Hiccup rubbed his arm with a reproachful look, Astrid said, "And that's for leaving me behind."

"Yeah, it's...uh...kinda rude." Eugene pointed out as he appeared. He jerked his thumb into the sky. "They're here, too, but North said they'd be more effective if they waited for a surprise attack. But, anyways, what's the plan here?"

"We were still deciding whether or not to wait." Jack replied.  
"Problem solved." He looked at Hiccup. "Next?"

Hiccup sighed. "Really, since Pitch's powers are unknown, I think defense might be our best bet for now."

"I'm alright with that." Merida announced. When Jack turned a skeptical look her way, she smirked, adding, "And the best defense is offense."

Hiccup threw up his hands. "Fine. But where is he?"

Jack pointed at the roiling mass of nightmare sand. "There would be a safe bet."

Hiccup nodded. "Right. Jack, you and I will try and draw Pitch to the ground. From there, we'll just see how it goes."

Merida sighed as the ones left behind started squabbling, and walked behind a rock to try and clear her mind. She felt a sudden cold, and looked down to see a shadow spread under her feet. Before she could cry for help, her stomach leapt into her throat and she fell straight down into a cavern.

"Lovely, isn't it?" A voice came from all around. "I wasn't idle for two years, you know, I've been expanding. My lair is quite large now, so don't entertain any hope of escape. You, my dear, are trapped, and your friends go off to fight without you. How sad."

Merida drew her sword, anger making it glow a scarlet red. "Pitch, are you such a coward that you can't face us alone?!"

Pitch laughed. "Oh, please. As if that would work." Merida backed away as he rose out of the ground far too close for comfort.

"Stay back!" She commanded, putting her sword between them. In response, a scythe appeared in Pitch's hands as he grinned at her.

"Alright. You put away the glowstick, and I'll put this away. Deal?"

Merida watched him warily as she slowly slid her sword into its sheath. "For now." She gritted out. Pitch smiled as his scythe disappeared.

"Well, that was easier than I expected. Are you afraid of something?"

Merida laughed. "Not you!"

Pitch smiled wolfishly. "Oh, I know that. His eyes almost seemed to shift color a little, but Merida told herself that it was just some trick he was playing, for they were now a blood red.

It's an illusion, it's an illusion. He's messing with you, Merida! She gritted her teeth and swung a fist at Pitch's face, making him backpedal as his eyes rapidly reverted to normal.

Pitch's smile grew. "You're afraid that you'll fail. That at the crucial moment when all depends on you, you'll make the wrong decision. You'll be too weak. None of your friends will be there to support you. Well, looks like you've got a problem, princess." He said, almost spitting her royal title like a curse. "Because you're all alone, and your friends go to a fate you won't share and a fate you can't stop."

Merida glared at him. "I've already changed fate. I can do it again."

Pitch nodded. "And a fine job you did! Turning your mother into a bear. Almost making her lose her humanity and then her life as she was hunted down like a rabid beast by her own husband. Oh, yes, I'm sure your friends would be happy to receive your aid."

Merida's breath came in shorter bursts now. "So...so what?" She snapped. "It's not like that can happen again!" She frowned when Pitch glanced at the floor and then followed suit. Her tirade died on her lips as she watched her shadow form into a monstrous bear. She held her hands up, but they looked normal. Yet when she moved, the bear on the floor mimicked the move as perfectly as a less coordinated animal could.

"Oh, dear." Pitch said sympathetically. "Looks like it's happening already."

Something inside Merida snapped, and she fled for a staircase. Out of the corner of her eye she saw the bear down on all fours, keeping alongside her like a horrible shadow puppet.

She ran until she skidded to a halt in front of a globe, the lights reminding her of North's globe. She then shrieked as Pitch appeared out of nowhere on the other side.

"And what will your friends say when they've realized what you've done?" He chuckled. "If of course, they're still capable of talking after you're through."

As he started backing down a corridor, Merida yanked her sword out, charging at the fading silhouette. Just before she could strike, the scenery around her changed and she found herself swinging her sword at Jack.

Her eyes flew open as Jack turned to look at her, an expression of fear growing on his face. He would be too late to defend himself, Merida was too close.

Merida grunted as she forced a foot backwards, breaking her momentum. The next moment she toppled backwards, gasping and letting the sword clatter from her hand. The action hadn't been completely in time, she saw a thin line of red on Jack's shoulder. What would have followed almost caused her to be sick.

"Whoa! Merida, it's ok!" She heard Jack saying.

She jerked her head up. "But...I almost killed yu, Jack! How is it okay?"

Jack sighed and shrugged. "Because you're back, you're in one piece,

I'm in one piece, and now we both have a bone to pick with Pitch. I assume he did something similar to you as he did to me, though that's a conversation for another time."

Merida looked around at the faces of her other friends. She clambered to her feet, scooping her sword up. "Sorry for the delay." She announced, twirling her sword expertly into position. "Pitch had a few things he wanted to say before we smashed his face in. Didn't go as he planned. Shall we remind him of that?"

## 32. Chapter 32: Here Comes the Calvary

### Chapter 32:

Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel shifted her weight from one foot to the other as she stood next to Eugene. When he glanced at her out of the corner of his eye, she offered him a shaky smile.

"Nervous, Bl-...Punzie?" He asked, smoothly inserting Jack's nickname for her.

She sighed. "It's ok if you still want to call me Blondie." She told him. "But yes, I am, and why shouldn't I be?"

Eugene smiled. "Only a great fool would not be nervous before marching into battle. However, it's when the nervousness changes to fear that we'll have a problem."

Rapunzel smirked. "Well, points for an eloquent start leading to a blunt finish. Though it does make the point well. Alright, I get it. But now we're back to the same old, same old because we aren't doing anything. It's going to drive me nuts!"

"Because talking to a reptile is perfectly normal and acceptable by societal and psychological standards." Eugene deadpanned, the struggle to hide a smile woefully obvious.

Rapunzel smacked him in the arm. "Pascal is different and you know it." She grumped.

Astrid glared at both of them. "Are you guys always like this? Because seriously, arguing right before going into a big fight isn't that smart." As she turned away, Rapunzel could have sworn she heard her mutter, "Not that I'm one to talk."

Rapunzel flashed a sheepish grin. "Sorry?" She offered. She then looked up at the clouds roiling overhead. "Though, you know, at this point we're still at a disadvantage because we don't know where Pitch is, while the converse does not hold true for him."

"Well, that's where we either draw him out or go after him." Astrid pointed out. She then glanced over at Jack. "Or set bait."

Rapunzel's jaw dropped. "You can't be serious."

"He'd be safe." Astrid defended.

"Have you seen Pitch attack?" Merida jumped in. "When he got me, all I saw was a shadow before I was sucked down. The reaction time allowance is only seconds."

"Uhhhh, w-welllll..." Astrid stammered.

"But what if we had someone, or something, that could sense his presence?" Jack inquired, jerking his thumb at Hiccup and Toothless.

Rapunzel stared at Jack. "You're actually ok with this idea." She demanded flatly.

Jack shrugged. "Well, we have any other actual ideas on the table?" He retorted. "If this is all we got, well, I'm not afraid to try it."

Merida raised an eyebrow. "But did Toothless notice when I went missing?"

Hiccup and Jack glanced at each other. "Uhhhhhh."

Rapunzel rubbed her temples. "So we either endanger all of us together, or endanger all of us together while putting one of us especially in harm's way. Riiiiight."

Jack sighed. "Don't forget that we have a trump card up our sleeve."

"But will it be enough? What if they can't make it in time?" Rapunzel insisted.

Jack shrugged. "We won't know until we find out."

"Alright, this is going in circles." Hiccup interrupted. "How about, for the moment, we just mosey around and wait for Pitch to show up and make fun of us. If that doesn't work, or he does show up but isn't engaging, then we move on to a more drastic step. Deal?"

Rapunzel let out a small sigh when everyone agreed. She then looked at Hiccup. "So do we have a location in mind for this meandering?"

Hiccup glanced at Jack pointedly. "Uh, do we?"

Jack sighed, then aimed his staff at the center of the storm. "Pitch is most likely to be there, it's where he'd have the most control over this thing. Perhaps we'll have the best chance if we're near there." He decided.

"Fair enough." Hiccup agreed, patting Toothless. "So, shall we?"

Rapunzel crossed her arms. "You're not planning on flying, are you?"

"He wouldn't be alone." Jack supplied.

"Yeah, but we miss out on all the fun." Eugene griped, hands on his hips.

Hiccup sighed. "And like we'd be dumb enough to try and engage alone. If Pitch appears, we'll bring the fight down to the ground."

Eugene nodded, mollified, and Rapunzel bit her tongue to keep herself quiet as Hiccup and Jack started flying off.

She then looked at Eugene. "So, you'll take Max and I'll paint myself a transport?"

Eugene looked at Max as the horse approached. When Max made no move to contradict, he shrugged and hopped on. Rapunzel smirked and painted a large lion to ride, swinging up onto it with a smug grin.

She looked over at Astrid. "You wanna ride?"

Astrid smirked, shook her head, then stuck two fingers in her mouth and emitted a high whistle. Rapunzel was about to ask what that was for when a blue dragon flew down, peering down at the astonished onlookers with one eye.

"I think I'll see if I can't give Hiccup a heart attack when I come in riding Stormfly." Astrid told her with a grin, patting the dragon's neck. She grew serious. "And, y'know, with the delayed approach, I'll be able to perform a surprise rescue if one of the guys get in trouble."

Rapunzel nodded. "In that case, you'd better get going."

Astrid waved, climbed onto Stormfly, and took off.

Rapunzel looked over to see Merida swing into the saddle on Angus. "We ready?" Rapunzel called. Upon receiving answers in the affirmative, she smiled and took off after the three that had gone ahead.

As she raced across the ground, she looked up, trying to see any trace of a fight that could be going on up ahead. She saw a flash of blue light, but she was then immediately distracted by a low chuckle to her left. She looked up to see a shadow tracking across the ground. She shivered when a voice emanated from it.

"\_Oh, dear, seems like you split up\_." The shadow clucked sympathetically, "\_Don't worry too much, I'll narrow it back down to one group soon enough.\_"

Rapunzel clenched her fist, and in response the lion roared and raked it's claws through the shadow, dissipating it.

"\_Very well\_." The shadow sighed as it appeared somewhere else. "\_Looks like the decision has been made. Say goodbye to the flying cavalry\_."

"Yeah, like you'll be able to keep them from regrouping or just plain kicking your butt." Rapunzel challenged as Merida and Eugene reigned in nearby.



The shadow chuckled. "\_Please. Up there, those weaklings are completely at my mercy. Well, they would be if I had any. So really, I hope you parted on good terms\_."

"Maniac!" Merida screeched, loosing an arrow. "As if yu'd win!"

The shadow laughed horribly as it disappeared for good. "\_Oh, but I already have. Your Guardians refuse to join the fight, and even if they do, they'll be too late. You've received some reinforcements, but not enough to hold me back for long. And besides, destroying you four after you've come so far will really be quite delicious\_."

Rapunzel gritted her teeth and urged her lion forwards again. "I don't believe him!" She yelled back. But a worm of fear was starting to coil in her gut. Hadn't she had those same misgivings just minutes ago? She glanced up but saw no sign of anyone going to the rescue. She let out a short puff of air, squashed her fear down, and added, "And there has to be something we can do!"

"\_And what would that be?\_" The air around them inquired politely, making Rapunzel whip her head back and forth as she tried to find the source of the voice. "\_You have no way of reaching them, and no way of fighting me unless I choose to appear to you. What can you three powerless little creatures do?\_" The voice took on a deeper, more malicious tone. "\_Especially seeing as one of you isn't even immortal. Why did you bring a mere human out here, when he is so woefully outclassed? What does he plan on doing, hmmm? Dying heroically whilst you two finish me off? Please.\_"

Rapunzel took in a sharp breath. "Leave him out of this." She snapped. "Or are you at the point that you must threaten humans in order to hopefully get two girls to step out of a fight?" She added, eyes flashing a challenge.

The voice chuckled. "\_You're getting better at baiting, but are still woefully inadequate. We'll see how much fire you have left when I deliver your friends' corpses to you.\_"

Merida shivered. "That's...twisted, even for yu, Pitch." She hissed.

However, no reply came. Rapunzel bit her lip and looked up at the sky. \_Please be ok.\_ She begged. \_Guardians, make it to them in time!\_

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Yup, that took a while. Sorry about the long delay for such a short chapter, but access to my computer has been really limited. And it will continue to be like so for another month or two, so uploads will be slow. Soorrrrrryyy...

### 33. Chapter 33: Space Warp

#### Chapter 33

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock

All in all, the plan was not going as expected. First of all, the plan was to get back to ground level should there be an attack. Second, under no circumstance had Hiccup planned to separate from Jack.

However, here he was, hundreds of feet above the ground, slashing Nightmares to dust with his sword. His arm ached horribly, but given the alternative, Hiccup gritted his teeth and fought on. After beating back yet another wave of Nightmares, Hiccup scanned the skies for any sign of Jack. He scowled when there was not a trace to be found.

\_How is this even possible?\_ He wondered irritably, \_We've been separated for only a couple minutes!\_

Yet the fight seemed to have lasted so much longer. It had started well enough, with Jack blasting a small group of Nightmares into oblivion with consummate ease. It had taken so little effort that they had simply grinned at one another and continued on. They had realized the trap too late when a maniacal cackle came from all directions before being drowned out by the furious cries of countless Nightmares. They had careened towards the two of them like a dark tidal wave, but Toothless had fired a plasma shot into the fray, giving Hiccup just enough time to slip through the break in ranks of the initial assault.

Not being equipped with anything so handy as dragon breath or just a plain dragon, Jack had been overrun by Nightmares and Hiccup hadn't seen him since.

Hiccup saw the next group coming from above and smirked. "Well, bud, that's an opportunity." He observed before sending Toothless into a vertical dive. Before he cleared the clouds, however, his peripheral vision caught a flash of blue hurtling downwards not far off. He quickly altered Toothless's course to catch Jack.

Thankfully, Jack saw him coming this time and somehow landed neatly behind Hiccup.

"Thanks." Jack said gratefully, but Hiccup noticed that he was breathing pretty hard and his voice sounded tight. He twisted in the saddle to look back and saw Jack's face was drawn with pain. Seeing Hiccup's questioning glance, Jack held up his staff, neatly broken in two.

He explained in bursts as Hiccup fought through the latest onslaught, "A Nightmare... broadsided me... broke my staff... and breaking it... causes me a LOT of pain. I can fix it... but too chaotic right now."

"So, basically we have a problem." Hiccup summarized. He sheathed his sword and turned back around, commanding, "Hold on!" He felt Jack scoot closer and then two cold arms circled his torso.

"Ready," Jack announced, then let out an excited whoop as Toothless folded his wings and dropped.

Hiccup hissed in annoyance as they were forced back up by a seething mass of Nightmares. Jack tensed suddenly, yelling, "Hiccup! Above you!"

Hiccup looked up to see another huge swarm bearing down from above. "Oh, no..." He moaned, then yelped in surprise as a vast majority of the attacking Nightmares disappeared in a burst of flame.

"Now that's how it's done!" Astrid yelled as she swooped by overhead.

"Astrid!" Hiccup called. "Great, but we've got more problems. We have to get Jack to the ground."

"Okay!" Astrid yelled back, "Get ready!" She carefully guided Stormfly next to Toothless and then held up three fingers, paused a beat, then dropped one down.

\_Two...\_ Hiccup counted mentally, looking away, \_One...Now!\_

Both dragons dove, simultaneously unleashing fire into the storm. The riders let out startled cries as, clearing the storm, they almost plowed straight into the side of a mountain. They then recovered and guided the dragons down to a relatively flat clearing.

As soon as they landed, Jack slipped off and ran to the edge of the clearing before stopping, setting his feet, and placing the two halves of his staff together.

Leaving Jack to that endeavor, Hiccup looked around. "Great." He griped. "And where exactly are we now?"

"I dunno." Astrid replied, straining to see something familiar on the ground. "I remember seeing mountains, but they were pretty far off. I have no idea what's going on, we weren't in that cloud long enough to have covered such a distance."

"What's going on," Hiccup sighed, "is that we could conceivably be anywhere right now."

Any further discussion was cut short by Jack's delighted yell as a gentle blue light filled the clearing.

"Oh, yeah!" Jack celebrated, swinging his newly restored staff around. "Back in action!"

"Great!" Astrid replied. "Where are we?"

Jack blinked a few times, then slowly took in the surrounding scenery. "Right...not Burgess." He muttered crossly.

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "Figured that out all on your own, did you?"

Jack sent a quick glare in his direction, then continued, "So, we should probably head down and see what's at the bottom."

"Why?" A smug voice inquired. "Ya lost?" Hiccup's heart skipped a beat as he whirled, fingers scrabbling for the hilt of his sword.

Bunny cast him an amused look before looking back at Jack, who had very nearly frozen Bunny solid, from the looks of things.

Jack eased out of the crouch he had gone into, muttering, "Mayyyybe," drawing the word out. He then tilted his head slightly. "Why? You here to get us un-lost?"

Bunny nodded. "Saw the storm spread over here, so I figured I'd see what Pitch was up to. And, whaddya know, I find you sad-sacks bumbling around. Well, no worries. All we gotta do is get ya back to Burgess before I head back to the flying death trap. Buckle up."

Jack looked at Bunny in alarm. "Wait, you're not g-ahhhhhhhhhhh!" He started to demand, before yelling as the ground underneath their feet disappeared.

Hiccup faintly heard Bunny's laughter, but that quickly faded as they slid down the tunnel at breakneck speeds before tumbling out in a jumbled heap in front of a rather surprised Merida.

"O...ow..." Hiccup complained as he freed himself.

Merida started snickering as she dismounted to help disentangle the rest. With a little effort, everyone got back on their feet - though it did take a little doing with the dragons.

"Glad to see you're so concerned for our welfare." Jack muttered as he dusted himself off.

"Concerned?" Merida demanded angrily. "We've been worried sick! Yu've been gone for at least twenty minutes, and we were startin' to think yu weren't ever comin' back!" She finished, eyes flashing.

"Gee, thanks for the vote of confidence." Jack retorted.

Merida gritted her teeth. "Yu weren't here ta listen to all the things Pitch was sayin'!"

Before Hiccup and Jack could process that, a cold voice scolded, My, my, someone's been naughty. Thus saying, Pitch appeared some distance away, hands behind his back and a dissatisfied scowl on his face. "So, who's the secret benefactor, hmmm? You were on the other side of the nation not even a minute ago, so how are you here now?" He demanded, growing angry at the end.

Jack smiled slowly. "That's for us to know, and for you to find out." He taunted.

Pitch glared at Jack, nightmare sand collecting around him. "I can arrange that." He threatened. He then hastily retreated as Toothless spat a plasma blast at him.

Hiccup patted Toothless's side approvingly before drawing his sword and pointing it at Pitch. "Perhaps you could," Hiccup explained agreeably, "but then there's the small matter of whether or not we'll let you. I hope you'll understand if the answer is no."

Before Pitch could make a snide remark, he looked over at the other three, who all had weapons prepped. Pitch bared his teeth in annoyance. "Have your bravado, then." He sneered, backing away,

"we'll see how long that lasts." Thus saying, a shadow enlarged underneath him and Pitch dropped out of sight.

Hiccup looked over at Jack hopefully, then gave a resigned sigh when Jack shook his head slightly.

"He seems to enjoy doing that." Rapunzel observed as she and Eugene rode up. She then gave Jack and Hiccup a disapproving glare. "And what happened to rejoining us should you get caught in a fight?"

"Pith had other ideas." Hiccup defended. "We were swamped by Nightmares and we couldn't get back down. Believe me, I tried."

Rapunzel's face fell. "We're royally outclassed, aren't we?" She murmured. "The only times Pitch has engaged with us, he's done little more than just toy with us. What chance do we stand?"

"None, if you're goin' ta think like that." Merida rebuked.

Before Rapunzel could retort, Hiccup butted in, "Did we stand a chance against the demon bear? Did I really stand a chance against the Red Death? Did you stand a chance against Gothel? Yet they were all defeated, and at no cost to us. Why?"

After a few moments, a tiny smile appeared on Rapunzel's face. "Because we worked together." She answered.

Hiccup smiled as well. "Exactly. And as long as we fight as a cohesive whole, I daresay nothing can stop us!"

Jack looked over at Hiccup. "Though there is the slight problem of Pitch being who knows where and us having this huge storm to deal with." He pointed out, gesturing upwards.

Merida suddenly gave a cry of alarm. "The kids!"

Everyone's gaze snapped to where she pointed, and sure enough, the small forms of the Burgess group could barely be seen.

"So that was his play, huh?" Hiccup muttered crossly.

"Trap." Astrid warned.

"Who cares?" Jack shot back, levitating. "Rapunzel, how fast can you paint some birds or something?"

Rapunzel blinked. "Really should have thought of that earlier."

Jack made a frustrated gesture, and Rapunzel got the message, quickly starting to paint some strange beings.

Hiccup frowned. "What are those?"

"Pterodactyls." Rapunzel replied smugly. "They're dinosaurs."

"Whatever they are, have some for you, Eugene, and Merida, and then one for each kid." Jack instructed.

Rapunzel rolled her eyes as pterodactyls started rising from her painting. "Duh, Jack."

When they had enough, everyone took to the skies as quickly as they could. Hiccup heard the happy cries of the kids when they saw their rescuers, and Toothless must have heard too because he accelerated, barreling through a Nightmare that dared get in his way. As fighting broke out, the free pterodactyls slipped through and caught the children.

As soon as all the children were safe, the rescuers formed up around the children and started diving towards the ground.

Immediately, the Nightmares screeched in consternation and formed into a huge, dense mass. Jack looked up, frowned and looked at Hiccup.

"Get everyone down and away, I'm going to try something." He instructed.

"What?" Hiccup yelled at him as Jack started slowing his descent.

"Something crazy and likely to not work!" Jack retorted. "And that you really don't want to be near!" He added meaningfully.

Hiccup sighed, gestured for everyone else to keep dropping, and then sighed. "So much for staying together." He muttered. He then flinched as he was slapped in the face by a rushing, frigid wind as a shockwave shook him. He looked up to see a blue-white light arcing from Jack like he had become some kind of frozen lightning bolt. As the Nightmares bore down on Jack, he let out a yell, aiming his staff at them.

Hiccup gaped as arcs of crackling winter magic swarmed the Nightmares, instantly freezing the attacking cloud and then going on to take out a good amount of the swirling storm overhead. He then flinched as the nightmare dust suddenly shattered as Jack's onslaught ended.

He rolled his eyes when he saw Jack falling. Again. Toothless caught Jack by one arm, where the winter spirit hung limply until they reached the ground. After a few moments, Jack let out a low moan and put a hand to his head, struggling to sit up.

"Are you making a habit out of doing something dumb and then making me catch you?" Hiccup demanded a tad irritably.

Jack fixed a scornful gaze on him, then pointed up at the clear sky. "Like you could have done that any better." He shot back, then relaxed and sighed. "Not that I did all that, Pitch probably decided that with the amount I got rid of and the fact that I wake pretty soon afterwards it might be wise to use the nightmare sand somewhere else."

Hiccup nodded slowly. "Kay, but we still don't know where Pitch is."

Rapunzel broke in with a rather meek voice, "Would you believe me if

I told you that he's right behind you?"

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Yup, I am a bad person. And proud of it. I really am trying to update more quickly, but life has different ideas. So I'll try to speed things up, but no promises and please don't hunt me down, I'm doing my best...

## 34. Chapter 34: Boss Battle

### Chapter 34

Jack Frost

Faster than thought, Jack and Merida brought their respective weapons up and loosed attacks at Pitch. Not expecting such a rapid response, Pitch was caught off guard and barely evaded Merida's arrow before getting slammed backwards by Jack's magic.

Hiccup took this opportunity to scramble away as fast as he could before jumping to his feet. He dragged his sword from his scabbard, and Jack winced, realizing they had never gotten Hiccup the new scabbard.

He then directed his attention to Pitch, who had since recovered and was giving them all his best wicked smirk.

Jack stepped forwards, holding his staff in a neutral position. "Lovely weather, don't you agree, Pitch?" He asked as if having a perfectly normal conversation with someone who was in no way trying to take over the world and brainwash all the children.

Pitch leered. "A tad cold, though a few measures to be taken in the near future will fix that." He then paused as Toothless moved forwards.

Hiccup grinned. "How'd you know?" Then Stormfly, previously unnoticed, spat a stream of fire at Pitch, effectively ringing him in momentarily. Pitch merely scoffed, but having his feet suddenly frozen to the ground did nothing to aid his likely plan of just diving into a convenient shadow. He aimed a sand arrow at Jack, but as soon as he let it fly, Merida's arrow intercepted it mid-flight.

Jack blinked at Merida, suitably impressed. "Don't suppose that you could aim for something a little more vital next time." He commented, spoiling the mood.

Merida raised an incredulous eyebrow. "I was a little busy savin' yur life."

Jack shrugged, suddenly flicking his staff up to freeze another arrow solid before sending a blast of wind to send it smashing into Pitch's face. "Assuming I don't have such things pretty much under control, which I do."

He then stared at Pitch, who was in the process of readying yet another arrow.

"Seriously? What, trying for 'third time's the charm'? Or maybe 'three strikes, you're OUT'!" As he shouted the last word, Pitch flinched, startled, which was the desired effect. While he was still a little off guard, Jack charged forwards, swinging his staff.

Pitch blocked with his scythe, but then Hiccup and Merida charged in with their swords. Jack smiled as he backed off, content to listen to Merida barking instructions to Hiccup, some of them slightly contradictory.

He then glanced over at Rapunzel. "What's the contemplative look for?' He asked.

Rapunzel frowned. "Where are his eyebrows?"

Silence instantly dropped as everyone looked at Rapunzel, then four amused gazes trained on Pitch.

"Huh. He doesn't." Hiccup mused. "Odd."

Merida took the opportunity of Pitch's continued shock to kick him in the stomach. Hard.

Pitch gagged and reeled backwards, winded from the blow. Jack then quickly froze him inside an ice crystal, leaving escape impossible.

He then frowned. "And that, my friends, was entirely too easy."

Hiccup frowned, circling the crystal. "But the question is, just what was the plan then?"

Rapunzel raised a hand. "While I hate to be the bearer of bad news twice, I just remembered the first time we met Pitch."

A cold prickle ran down Jack's spine. "When he used a fake." He recalled, resisting the urge to embellish his language as he shattered the ice crystal, proving that the Pitch they had fought was fake as pathetic wisps of nightmare sand wafted around before freezing and disappearing. Acting on instinct, he and Merida went back to back as Hiccup and Rapunzel did likewise. They then shot simultaneous glares at each other.

"Not the time, guys." Hiccup scolded. "Kill each other later, kay?"

Jack shrugged. "Fine by me."

Merida grumbled, but made no further move.

Jack gnawed his lower lip as he scanned his surroundings. "What we need is about 50 million floodlights." He muttered crossly. "That way there couldn't be any shadows."

"Well, in the unfortunate absence of that undoubtedly necessary asset," Rapunzel teased, "what's the plan?"

Jack's reply died in his throat when the merry sound of sleigh bells



filled the air and North landed the sleigh neatly next to the surprised group.

"What is holdup?" North called. "Pitch is in Burgess!"

Jack gritted his teeth as a small hand latched onto his sleeve like it was a lifeline. He looked down to see Jamie looking at him with wide eyes.

"Hey, don't worry, kiddo." Jack assured him. "We beat him once, it'll be easy to do it again." He added, addressing the entire group, who had come closer after the 'defeat' of the fake Pitch.

"\_Da\_!" North agreed heartily. "This time, we have upper hand!"

Jamie still didn't look convinced, but returned to his pterodactyl. North gave the creatures a strange glance, then shrugged and grabbed the reins.

After everyone was ready to go North snapped the reins, and all the Guardians flew in full formation to Burgess.

Jack flew close to Jamie as they drew near the town and flashed one of his signature grins at the boy. "You ready to give Pitch a smack-down he won't soon forget?"

Jamie gave Jack a look. "Hopefully concerning less than a desperate snowball to his face like last time."

Jack stuck his tongue out. "It was hilarious and you know it."

All conversation died down when they landed in the town. Everyone jumped out of the sleigh, and the animals that were ridden were directed to stay with it. Max didn't seem pleased, but Jack resolved to get the horse an apple if he behaved.

As they moved through the silent town, Jack eyed the shadows, determined to make sure nothing snuck up on them. Of course, it happened anyways.

It happened as they were going through an intersection. One minute all was well and good, and the next nightmare sand was blasting out of manhole covers and gutters like black geysers. It had blasted the senior Guardians and children in all directions.

Fortunately, the Guardians kept their presence of mind even under attack, and each had been able to secure holds on the children, making sure every child was kept safe. Relatively.

Jack shrugged at his flabbergasted teammates. "Well, looks like Pitch decided that he was too chicken to take us all at once."

Rapunzel looked around anxiously. "What if he attacks them instead?"

Jack sighed and shook his head. "Doubtful. Think about it. Who in the Guardians has caused him the most grief?"

Rapunzel nodded. "You."

Jack paused, then smirked. "Yeah, I guess, though I was going for us as a whole."

Merida snickered. "Well, it's not like yu to not take full responsibility for being a pain."

Jack spread his arms wide. "Hey! I am undoubtedly the world's very best at being a pain in the butt. However, with you three, I must say that the irritation for Pitch must rise exponentially."

Hiccup rubbed his temples. "That being said, you guys are awfully nonchalant for not only being separated from the Guardians, but that you're not even watching for an attack."

Jack shrugged again. "He'll probably indulge in his need to gloat before attacking."

He then wordlessly pointed up to a rooftop where the unmistakable silhouette of Pitch was staring down at them.

"You seem rather unflustered that I significantly reduced your little ragtag resistance with minimal effort." Pitch pointed out.

Jack flashed his teammates a told-you-so look before tilting his head at Pitch. "Yeah, well, that was them." He explained. "Nothing happened to us whatsoever."

Pitch rolled his eyes, vanished, then materialized right in front of them. "If you have a problem with that, I can change that." He hissed.

Merida hefted her sword. "Bring it, Eyebrows." She challenged, then smirked. "Oh, wait." She added, pretending to be flustered.

A grin broke out on Jack's face despite an effort to remain straight-faced. "Maybe we should inquire towards his penchant for wearing a dress?"

Rapunzel nodded slowly. "Or maybe his seeming inability to have a prolonged engagement since he seems to run away each time he clashes with us."

Hiccup valiantly fought down a snicker. "Oh! Or the fact that so far he's hidden behind females to do his bidding for quite some time now."

Pitch glared, but Jack forestalled a comment. "Wait. What females?"

Hiccup shrugged. "His Nightmares. Mares are female horses, and as far as I know he doesn't have any Nightstallions."

Jack choked back a laugh and forced a serious look. "Man. So, what? We've got the no eyebrows, the man-dress, the non-tactical retreat habit, and the penchant to hide behind girls. Hoo, boy. This will be a toughie."

Jack then swayed to the side as Pitch, enraged, swung his scythe at him.

"You want a fight?" Pitch snarled. "You've signed your death warrants."

Hiccup smirked. "I don't think so."

Pitch focused in on him. "Oh? This coming from the little twerp who's powerless without his dragon spewing fiery death on all who dare oppose him. Excuse me while I cower in fear of the reptile that's not here."

Hiccup shrugged, tapping his sword against the pavement. "Perhaps. Perhaps not. Care to find out?"

Jack noticed Pitch getting ready to lunge and forestalled the motion by bringing his staff up, which began glowing and crackling with magic. "Besides. Even without the dragon, he's hardly alone." He noted.

Hiccup glanced at the staff warily. "If you do something dumb, I'm not catching you."

"You won't have to." Jack retorted.

Merida sighed. "Hiccup, Jack, not the time."

Jack pouted. "You're not one to talk." He told her in a slightly petulant tone.

"Children, children." Rapunzel chided. "Not in front of our nemesis, I'm sure he doesn't want to listen to your squabbling."

Jack grinned. "Precisely." He then calmly swung his staff at Pitch, catching him off guard.

Pitch bent slightly as the staff connected with his stomach, forcing him backwards.

Immediately Merida nocked and fired an arrow, but Pitch deflected it with a blast of nightmare sand. Jack saw Rapunzel kneel down in his peripheral vision, and moved forwards to draw Pitch's attention. Hiccup moved forwards slightly, placing himself in a position to be able to join the attack or defend Rapunzel.

Jack iced the ground under Pitch's feet, causing him to skid slightly, then charged forwards on the attack, fervently hoping that Merida didn't try to engage in melee as well.

Pitch's eyes flared with anger, and the next moment Nightmares were pouring out of the manholes and down from rooftops. They were surrounded in seconds.

Jack ignored his sense of deja vu as the Nightmares pressed in closer. He then blinked as Hiccup snickered. \_Just what is it about this situation that he finds laughable?\_ The cause of his amusement was explained when there was a high-pitched whistle and nearly half of the Nightmares were vaporized.

Toothless landed neatly next to Hiccup and gave him a look like \_See what you get into when I'm not around?\_

An angry whinny galvanized them all into action, though. As his teammates charged into action, Jack leveled a glare at Pitch. When Pitch obligingly attempted to gain a better standpoint by disappearing underground, Jack darted forwards and tackled him into the side of a building.

Pitch kicked him backwards, and Jack flew a good distance before rolling back to his feet. Not a moment too soon, as Jack blasted a sand arrow to oblivion.

Jack heard a distressed yell from somewhere, but he knew that right now he couldn't take his attention from his opponent. To do so would be suicide. Pitch, however, merely flashed Jack a sadistic grin before summoning his scythe up, moving forwards to attack. Jack charged forwards as well, rolling under the first attack and coming up inside the reach of the scythe. Before he could land a hit, however, Pitch smirked and changed his scythe into a sword. Jack released all the tension in his legs, dropping into a slightly undignified heap, but he avoided the blow. He then scrambled backwards, trying to get to a safer distance.

Pitch rolled his eyes derisively and went to stab downwards, but then Merida and Hiccup were there, blocking the strike and moving forwards, forcing Pitch to back off quickly, daunted by the two swords coming at him at once.

Rapunzel skidded to a stop next to Jack. "Are you alright?" She demanded.

Jack nodded, clambering to his feet. "Y-yeah." He replied. He looked over at Merida and

Hiccup, who seemed to have a pretty good handle on things. "Great. Now I feel superfluous."

Rapunzel gave him a look. "And like that's really stopped you before."

Jack smirked. "Course not." He flew up into the air, then starting pelting Pitch with snowballs just to show he could. The added benefit was that either Pitch dealt with the snowballs and risked getting impaled, or ignored the snowballs, leaving them to cover his face in snow, blinding him and still leaving him open to attack.

Jack laughed as Pitch finally roared in frustration and sent a blast of sand at him. Jack dodged easily and nailed Pitch in the face with an even bigger snowball in retaliation. When Nightmares came out to attack, Jack shrugged and had a field day blasting them into oblivion.

When he had thinned the numbers down to an acceptable level, he started chucking snowballs at Pitch any time he had a free moment in dealing with the Nightmares.

It was dangerous, but definitely worth it as Pitch glared at him with loathing in his eyes before summoning massive amounts of nightmare sand to rocket him into the air. Jack was faster, though, and was shooting upwards at the same pace, stopping when they came to thick cloud cover. He turned, grinned infuriatingly at Pitch, then dropped

into the cloud.

He then flew rapidly to the left, sensing rather than seeing the attacks Pitch was loosing blindly in an attempt to hit him. So he wasn't stupid enough to come in after him. Fine. With a touch of magic, he made the clouds grow and darken with the promise of snow. He then whipped the moisture up into a wind and gleefully sent the baby blizzard careening at Pitch.

He then pouted as nightmare sand blasted out, totally clearing the air even though the wind maintained some momentum.  
"Really?"

"Really." Pitch parroted, nightmare sand gathering in one hand. He then raised his arm, the sand forming a lance, and hurled it at Jack.

Jack snickered and watched as the wind whipped the lance away almost before it had completely left Pitch's hand.

His amusement died when Pitch didn't seem very disappointed in the turn of events. Realizing that the wind was moving in a circle, he dropped, wincing as the lance hissed by overhead.

He then moved back up to a higher position, watching as the lance lost momentum and plummeted downwards.

When Pitch started gathering nightmare sand again, Jack dropped into the wind, letting it start to carry him around Pitch in dizzying circles. Pitch blinked and dropped his hands, unable to get a clear shot anymore. It was then that Jack burst out of the wind, knocking Pitch to the side and sending them both into the wind.

"FROOOOOOOST!" Pitch bellowed. "Enough of this childish pranking!"

"I dunno, I'm having quite a lot of fun here. Though if you don't like it, you could always surrender." Jack replied sweetly.

In response Pitch summoned massive amounts of nightmare sand, blasting Jack off of him and allowing him to recover much faster.

As fast as Jack was, he would've been in trouble had a rather irritated falcon not started harassing Pitch, giving Jack valuable time to recover.

He renewed the winds whipping around Pitch, enlarging the eye of the storm to give the hawk maneuvering room and lessen the chance that Pitch could stop the winds again.

He grinned at Rapunzel as she waved at him from the back of what seemed to be a giant eagle. "Though we had established that nobody was supposed to hog all the fun!" She yelled at him.

He shrugged. "Eh, I was just rolling with the punches."

"Because that's worked so well the rest of the time." Hiccup pointed out as he leveled out next him, Merida close behind on another pterodactyl.

Jack rolled his eyes. "Okay, is this a military tribunal or a battle?" He asked irritably. "Gimme a break here."

Merida gave him a look, then heated an arrow, aimed, and shot it so that the winds whipped it around to hit Pitch in the leg.

Pitch yelled as the leg collapsed and Jack ever so helpfully dissipated the winds to send Pitch toppling into Burgess Wood.

When Pitch sprawled on the frozen lake, Jack grinned. "Glad I refroze it, aren't you?" He asked, a hint of anger coloring his words as he remembered finding the lake thawed.

Pitch scrambled to his feet, managing to look condescending even though he was subtly putting almost all of his weight on the uninjured leg. "Oh, please, Frost." He scoffed. "Your pathetic attempts at being threatening are laughable."

Jack glanced at his teammates, then raised an eyebrow as he readied his weapon with them. "As are yours." He told Pitch calmly.

Taken aback, Pitch looked at the four Guardians prepped for a tussle and seemed to deflate a little.

Jack furrowed his brows, dipping his staff lower, but then realized the bluff and sent a concussive blast of ice at Pitch as he sent nightmare sand blasting at the group. He heard gasps as visibility dropped to almost zero, and concentrated. He was rewarded by small breezes that wrapped around each of them, clearing the debris from the air and allowing more visibility. When he saw them looking at them, he struck a dramatic superhero pose.

However, to be honest, the effect was somewhat ruined as a tendril of nightmare sand snaked around his feet and knocked him to the ground. He rolled as Pitch's scythe came out of nowhere, then grinned as it sank into the ice. He quickly grabbed the blunt edge of the scythe, freezing the whole thing solid before Pitch could draw back.

Jack then summoned a wind to clear away the rest of the debris in the air so that he could see better. With that accomplished, he focused intently, then hit the ice by Pitch with his staff. It thawed instantly, and Jack froze it again after Pitch had fallen in the water up to his stomach. Jack then stood, crossing his arms.

"So there." He said proudly.

He then turned at the sound of laughter to see the Burgess group running out to him, the Guardians following.

Laughing, Jack hugged Jamie, then stood and grinned at the rest of them. "Hey, did you guys see the fish I caught? Figured I'd try my hand at ice fishing, and the fishie I caught was too big for the hole!"

"Release me at once!" Pitch bellowed, writhing in an attempt to get free.

Jack gave Jamie a confused look. "Is this area catch and release?"

Jamie shook his head. "Nope, though, I dunno that your fish would be any good to take home and eat, either."

Jack howled with laughter, but blinked when moonlight started filling the clearing as the clouds cleared. He glanced at Pitch, who was looking up in horror.

Jack looked over at North, but the question died when he saw the solemn look on North's face.

Turning to a different source, Jack knelt down by Sandy and poked him, then pointed at Pitch. Sandy considered Pitch, then carefully formed a moon, then a flashlight with its beam on, then Pitch, and then a capital G.

Jack's eyes widened. Man in moon was turning Pitch into a Guardian?

Sandy looked up at the moon, then let out a disappointed puff of air. He formed a G, then released it violently. Not a Guardian.

Jack squinted when a sudden blast of light filled the clearing, and when it cleared, Pitch was gone.

"Wh...what?" He exclaimed. "What just happened?"

"Man in moon has taken Pitch to his palace. Pitch has not learned from two defeats, so I do not know what he faces." North replied. "Perhaps Man in Moon will turn Pitch into the spirit he was meant to be, not evil like now."

"...Oh." Jack muttered. He looked at Sandy, who shrugged cheerfully. \_He wouldn't be like this if Pitch was facing something really bad, it's not in his character.\_ Jack decided, and allowed a triumphant smile to appear.

The next moment he was ambushed by three excited Guardians.

"We did it! WE DID IT!" Rapunzel squealed in joy.

"That was AWESOME!" Hiccup agreed.

"Aye, yu did good there, Frost." Merida admitted.

Jack smiled at his teammates. No. He laughed along with his friends.

## 35. Chapter 35: Guardian of Bravery

### Chapter 35

#### Merida DunBroch

Merida smiled ruefully as they sent the Burgess group to bed before assembling on the lake again. Jack had frozen the hole in the ice, and at the moment was spinning around in dizzying circles, thickening the layer of ice over the lake.

She walked over. "Last time I checked, freezin' water in the middle of the summer isn't normal." She commented.

Jack grinned. "Yeah, well." He replied, leaning on his staff. "The kids don't put a lot of stock in it, since the adults have just accepted that the lake is haunted or something."

Merida raised an eyebrow. "Haunted."

She then screeched when someone yelled, "BOO!" right behind her. She whirled to see Rapunzel and Eugene cracking up, and then escalating to wild cackling as they saw her face.

"Yu...yu li'le..." Merida sputtered, then whirled when Jack started laughing too.

"I've created a monster!" Jack announced gleefully. "Oh, I can't wait to see your kingdom!"

At that comment, everyone sobered. North came over and patted Rapunzel on the back, nearly knocking her over.

"Yes, have much to talk about." North confirmed. "We must find way to anchor worlds together, or there is risk of them falling back apart. Unless that is what you want."

"No!" Merida argued heatedly. "Of course we want the worlds to stay connected. But how?" She added.

Jack shrugged. "Well, perhaps creating physical links would help." He suggested. When everyone turned to look at him, he shrugged. "Like, I dunno, planting a flower from the pole in Corona, or have North make the Vikings of Berk some weapons. 'Course, I dunno that arming the Vikings with magical weapons is necessarily wise."

Rapunzel smirked. "Uh, hello? How about having a Guardian born from our world constantly going back and forth?"

Bunny slowly clapped. "And, what do you know, an intelligent idea."

Jack scowled, and a moment later, ice had frozen Bunny's legs to the lake and a hole opened in the ice, allowing frigid water to spray over Bunny.

He then grinned angelically. "Oh, dearie me. We'd better hop in the sleigh and get back to the Pole before Bunny gets hypothermia."

Merida shook her head as she headed to the sleigh. "Yu're evil. Plain evil."

Jack pretended to think. "Nah, I think Pitch fits that bill better. I'll settle for devilishly, maniacally mischievous."

Rapunzel wrinkled her nose. "Isn't 'devilishly' normally paired with handsome?"

Jack smirked. "Well, you know, that too." He replied modestly.



Merida snorted. "Puh-lease."

Jack wiggled his eyebrows. "Please what?"

Merida opened and closed her mouth a few times, then decided to handle it like she normally did, starting to move forwards, hand falling to her hilt. "Please hold still for a few moments, aye?"

Jack tilted his head, then grinned. "Nay." He responded, levitating rapidly.

"Um, guys?" Hiccup cut in. "Bunny. Pole. Shall we?"

"Nah, ya guys have somewhere else ta be. I'll catch up momentarily." Bunny replied as he finally freed himself from the ice and bounded over to the bank. He then opened a tunnel and disappeared.

Merida cast a confused look at North, then shrugged and climbed into the sleigh. After they took off, she gasped when North pulled out a snowglobe and yelled, "DunBroch!"

She shut her eyes as they were yanked through the portal, then gasped as they flew out over her castle. "Land in the courtyard!" She ordered.

North complied, and Merida quickly hopped out to forestall any attacks from castle guards.

She smirked when Maudie appeared, opened her mouth, and then just left it that way.

She sighed, then pointed at a guard. "Make sure nothing happens to this." She commanded, patting the sleigh. "Nothing." She stressed. The guard nodded vehemently, and she led the group into the throne room.

She grimaced when she saw the other clan leaders there, but then had to smile at their reactions as the Guardians all entered behind her.

"Mother, Father, may I introduce the Guardians." She announced, proceeding to rattle off the names of all present. "The Easter Bunny should be here shortly."

"Shortly, indeed." He grumped. "I'm right here."

She rolled her eyes, then looked at North. "So..."

"Ah, yes!" North happily took over, rubbing his hands. "Now down to tacks of brass!"

Merida blinked, but a slight head shake from Jack forestalled a comment.

However, her father predictably stood, silencing a comment from Lord MacHaddish. "Before we proceed," he started, glancing back at her mother before continuing, "we would like to know the conditions of Merida's new situation."

Merida stifled a laugh as she realized that her father had been practically spoon-fed that little speech.

She stepped forwards. "Well, for starters, I'm now the immortal Guardian of Bravery." She announced, getting it all out in one blow.

Hearing a snort from one of the clan leaders, she rapidly unsheathed her sword, which instantly glowed red hot.

"Nice!" Jack commented as he moved away. "You're getting it pretty down!"

Merida rolled her eyes. "Uh-huh. Why don't yu come over here then and test it out?"

Jack grinned. "Nope. Not a chance." He said.

Merida raised an eyebrow. "Yu dare disobey the princess of DunBroch?"

Jack pretended to think. "Yup, pretty much."

Merida charged, and Jack used the wind to lift himself in a neat flip over Merida before landing and shooting a blast of ice. Merida swung her blade through it, then advanced once more. Jack flew up in the air, snow and ice swirling around him in huge gusts before he hurled it at Merida.

Acting on impulse, Merida crouched, holding her sword like she was blocking a sword stroke. As the blade increased in heat, the snow melted, effectively evaporating the blizzard.

Jack, however, had not been idle, and before Merida could react, he condensed the moisture from the melted snow and froze all her joints in place.

"Not bad, for someone going up against an opponent more than ten times their age." Jack complimented before releasing the ice.

Merida got up, shaking the chill from her limbs. "One of these days, Frosty, one of these days." She promised.

Jack groaned. "Enough with the Frosty already, frizzy!"

Fast as a viper, Merida's sword was aimed at Jack's head. "Enough with the frizzy."

Jack shrugged. "Pax?" He suggested. "Mutual treaty of finding different demeaning nicknames so as to avoid this cyclical argument that would get extremely tiresome after the first fifty years or so?"

Merida sheathed her sword. "Yu're still gonna get wot's coming to yu."

"Fair enough." Jack agreed. "I mean, statistically, you have to stop

losing sometime."

"Auuuufff!" Merida exclaimed, turning away from Jack. She then sighed when she saw the thunderstruck expressions of all present, Guardians not excluded. "So, ah, yep." She finished weakly. "That."

Her father laughed uproariously. "That was worth seeing!" He exclaimed happily, turning to the her mother. "I'd say that answers our question pretty well!"

Her mother smiled thinly, but before she could speak, Merida cut in, "And, of course, unless I'm needed elsewhere I'll be livin' here." She confirmed. "P'raps not as the next queen, but I'll be here, nonetheless, going back and forth between here and the Pole. This is my palace, and I see no need to change that."

"Well, not all of us have castles, you know." Jack muttered out of the side of his mouth.

"I do." She replied in the same manner.

Her mother sighed, and nodded. North smiled, took a huge book that one of the Yetis reverently handed to him, and flipped it open to a page.

"Right." He muttered. "Will you, Merida DunBroch, vow to watch over the children of the world? To guard them with your life, their hopes, their wishes, and their dreams. For they are that we have, all that we are, and all that we will ever be."

Merida stood up straighter and said, "I will."

North smiled, "Then, congratulations, for you are now, and FOREVERMORE! a Guardian."

Any comment Merida could have made was forestalled by getting tackle hugged by Rapunzel.

"You're a Guardian! You're a Guardian!" Rapunzel was yelling happily.

When Merida was finally released, she raised one eyebrow. "Because you totally won't be within a few hours or so." She deadpanned.

Rapunzel shrugged, ceding the point. "Fair enough." Then the grin was back. "But that doesn't take away from the fact that you are one right now."

Merida had to smile as well. "No, I suppose it doesn't."

She was then picked bodily off the ground by North as he loudly kissed the air next to each cheek. When she was put down, Jack gave her a look like Just go with it, that's normal.

She shrugged. Well then. She then blinked as Jack suddenly disappeared under three ecstatic young boys. She then started forwards as Jack reflexively started to freeze them, then realized what was going on and instead just slicked the soles of their boots and left them to trying to gain traction when their feet kept

rebellious. Merida stopped. Where had he learned something like that?

He grinned as he sauntered away like nothing had happened. At Merida's incredulous look, he shrugged. "The elves give quite a bit of practice."

Merida shrugged in acquiescence. "True."

Jack then cast a suspicious look at Merida's father as he barreled towards them. However, he merely swept Merida his arms and did a little dance around.

Merida giggled when she was put down. She then almost toppled over as one of the triplets, Hubert, maybe? barreled into her legs. She whisked backwards before he could grab her skirt for balance and he was left trying to run forwards.

Jack then grinned. "Dude, seriously, just glide." He told the triplets. Before Merida could stop him, he showed them how to move and they were instantly off, skidding and barreling into people who were trying to figure out just what the little princes were doing.

"Thanks a lot, Frost." Merida grumped.

Jack smirked, still watching the triplets, "Yeah, well, I give them about till...oh, now."

Merida had to clap a hand over her mouth to keep from laughing as the ice suddenly melted from their feet, leaving them sprawling once more.

She then turned as Hiccup snickered. "Wot?"

He shrugged. "Oh, nothing, just thinking."

Her smile then faded when North came over with a serious expression. "You have choice." He informed her. "You can stay with family, or come to other celebrations."

Merida gave North a look. "Is that really a choice? Of course I'm comin' to the other celebrations!" She exclaimed.

North nodded. "In which case, everyone! Er, Guardians! To the sleigh!"

Bunny backed off. "Oh, no, mate. I'm takin' the tunnels."

North shrugged. "Why are rabbits always so nervous?"

Bunny shot a death glare at an overly inquisitive palace hunting dog. "Can't have anything to do with the environment."

The new Guardians dissolved into snickers as they headed for the sleigh.

"Man, you should have seen his face when Jamie's greyhound started chasing him around." Jack was saying, "It was priceless!"

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Yep. As you guys can probably guess, there's only a few chapters left until this is over. I know, it's sad, but it just means that they won, right? 'Sides, if this is some kind of 'can't live without it' deal, well, I'm already planning other fics so just read them!

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## 36. Chapter 36: Guardian of Creativity

### Chapter 36

Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel looked down, then squealed in delight when she saw that the world they had come to was Corona. She looked back, then had to smile at how miserable Jack looked.

"You ok there?" She asked him.

He leveled a stare at her. "I'm a winter spirit." He explained in clipped sentences, "It is the middle of spring in a rather warm and sunny kingdom. Do you really think I'm all right?"

Rapunzel couldn't stop a grin from breaking through. "How do you think I felt at the Pole, then, huh?"

Jack glared at her. "If you're cold, it's pretty easy to warm up. If you're too warm, however, there's not much you can do about it."

Rapunzel shrugged. "Jump in a lake?"

Jack let the silence stretch, then slowly raised an eyebrow. "Been there, done that." He muttered, before moving to the opposite side of Bunny where he was shielded from the sun.

Rapunzel rolled her eyes as Bunny tried to move and Jack got a death grip on his wrist, keeping his sun protection in place.

"Oh, knock it out, you two." Hiccup told Jack and Bunny.

The two glared at Hiccup, now perfectly content to stay as they were now that there was a common enemy.

Before the situation got out of hand, Rapunzel jumped up and leaned out over the sleigh, pointing. "Hey! Look! There's my castle!"

"Another castle." Jack muttered. "Lovely."

"It's ok." Hiccup stage whispered. "I don't have one either. Just a really big Great Hall."

Jack fixed a baleful stare on all of them. "Though, you know, I've heard that old, large buildings like that often have problems with drafts."

Merida fixed a cold glare on him. "Yu wouldn't dare."

Jack grinned. "Wouldn't I?"

"Not now that we all have proof that it's likely to be yu and also have the means to make yu regret it." She replied with a cheerful tone.

Jack sighed and stuck his tongue out. "Bring it on, carrot-top."

"C-carrot?!" Merida shrieked. "Wot kinda-"

She then stopped and looked around as everyone else started cracking up. "And I thought yu were my friends." She muttered bitterly.

Of course, that just made them laugh harder. Merida threw her hands up and looked at the castle more closely. "Whoa." She muttered.

Rapunzel smiled. "Yeah, my castle was built less with functionality in mind and more of being pretty and impressive."

"Yeah, well, it's also pretty impressive." Jack quipped as he looked at it. "Hey, does it ever snow here?"

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. "Well, yeah, but only a little bit in the middle of winter."

Jack grinned. "Good enough. I wanna see what it looks like covered in snow."

Rapunzel sighed and shook her head. "Honestly?"

"I agree with Jack." North broke in. "Snow makes everything beautiful."

"Well, maybe not everything." Jack snickered, poking Bunny.

"Seriously, mate?" Bunny groaned, brushing the frost from his fur.

Hiccup blinked innocently at the other occupants of the sleigh. "Serious? What's that?"

That sent the young Guardians into fits of laughter.

"Yes, ok, here we are!" North announced unnecessarily as he brought the sleigh to a jolting halt.

Rapunzel pushed a groggy Sandy off her, where he had tumbled due to the jerkiness of the landing, and scrambled down to the ground, waving at the castle guards.

The castle immediately erupted into activity as the king and queen came hurrying out, enveloping Rapunzel in a huge hug.

Rapunzel's mother felt Rapunzel's new hairdo, but Rapunzel, with a promise to fill them in later, dragged them to meet the rest of the

Guardians.

That being said, she had to have North drag a protesting Jack from out from underneath the sleigh to say hi.

They quickly went inside the castle before Jack could hide again.

Seeming to perk up a little bit in the cooler atmosphere, Jack grinned. "Not bad, Punzie."

He then blinked in surprise as a guard jumped to the side before a collision could happen.

"Sorry, sir!" The guard hurriedly apologized.

Jack broke into a huge smile. "It's no problem." He told the guard. When the guard went back to his business, he turned the smile to Rapunzel. "They can see me!"

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. "Well, yeah."

Jack sighed. "Need I remind you about the circumstances of such a declaration?"

Rapunzel waved a hand vaguely in the air. "Yeah, whatever."

She continued on before Jack could make an indignant response, entering onto a balcony behind the palace.

"Oh, no. No, no." Jack said with a nervous laugh tainting his words. "I'm not going outside again."

Merida rolled her eyes. "Sad."

Jack glared at her. "Shaddup." He muttered, staying back in the shade.

Hiccup sighed. "She'll be freezing in Berk, so can we just make it a moot point and suffer through it?"

Jack sighed grumpily and slowly made his way out onto the balcony, pulling his hood up over his head to shade his face. "Emphasis on suffer." He muttered darkly.

North cast him a dirty look, and Jack seemed to decide not to honk him off and fell mostly silent.

North nodded, and took the book. "You have no objections to Rapunzel becoming Guardian, correct?" He asked the king.

Rapunzel looked over at them. "I'd still be living here, I'd just have other duties besides running a kingdom." She sighed. "Plus the whole being immortal, being invisible to those who don't believe in me, and having super awesome powers."

She had to smile at the skeptical looks on her parents faces, and quickly knelt down and painted a kitten. She then grinned as she picked a mewling fluffball up when she stood again. "See?" She said, holding the kitten out proudly.

"Oh, yeah, a marvelous and terrifying beast." Merida muttered.

"An elephant would have destroyed the balcony." Rapunzel informed her flatly.

Jack laughed. "You're getting good at comebacks!"

Jack and Merida looked at each other. "So are yu takin' credit for that or do I get to?" Merida inquired innocently.

Jack shrugged. "Since she probably learned it from us bickering I say we split the bragging rights 50-50."

Merida nodded. "Deal."

Rapunzel rolled her eyes, putting the kitten down. It curled up into a ball before sinking back into the ground.

Everyone present stared. "Well, that's a...thing." Hiccup muttered intelligently.

Rapunzel blinked. "Yeah..." She then shrugged. "Whatever."

"Wotever?" Merida almost yelled. "Yu coulda done that with the elephants, but wotever?"

Rapunzel giggled nervously. "I hadn't figured that out just yet?"

"Besides, I doubt you've figured out everything about your power." Tooth reminded Merida. "Give her a break."

The king and queen had been studying all this with blank faces.

Rapunzel gave them her best puppy eyes. "See? Lotsa benefits, not many drawbacks."

"Besides the whole 'people not seeing you' deal." Jack muttered, earning him an elbow in the gut from Bunny.

"Be quiet, ya gumby, tha's not helpin' the decision process." He hissed.

"Yeah, ok." Jack hissed back irritably, rubbing his stomach.

"Anyways!" North interrupted. "Let's begin!"

The king and queen looked at each other, then nodded at Rapunzel. She beamed and went to stand before North as he opened his book.

North intoned solemnly, "Will you, Rapunzel Fitzherbert, vow to watch over the children of the world? To guard them with your life, their hopes, their wishes, and their dreams. For they are that we have, all that we are, and all that we will ever be."

Rapunzel nodded, blinking back happy tears. "I will."



North grinned. "Then, congratulations, for you are now, and FOREVERMORE! a Guardian."

Rapunzel grinned when Merida nudged her with her elbow. "Told yu that yu would be next." Merida teased her happily.

"Woohoo." Jack waved his staff in the air. "Can we get going before I melt?"

All the spirits accustomed to warmer weather rolled their eyes, but Hiccup and North agreed quickly.

Everyone made their way back to the sleigh, with Jack immediately positioning himself with Bunny as a sun protection once again.

"Again?" Bunny groaned.

Jack looked up at him mutinously. "Unless you want me bugging North while he's driving the sleigh, you're the largest protection possible."

Merida and Hiccup snickered until Bunny gave them both a death stare. "Don't think ya can get away with this." Bunny finally warned Jack.

Jack grinned as North prepared to throw the snow globe. "Are you kidding? You're about to be begging for mercy. You ever been to Berk?"

"Oh, struth..." Bunny cursed a couple more times in Australian as they approached the portal.

"Careful, Bunny." Hiccup warned with satisfaction. "There are children present."

"Why, ya drongo, I oughtta...!" Whatever Bunny ought to do was lost as they spun through the portal.

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>Woohoo. Almost done. So, I'm planning one, maybe two more chapters for this. Stick with me!<p>

## 37. Chapter 37: Guardian of Friendship

### Chapter 37

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III

Hiccup had to actively fight back a laugh as he saw Bunny and Rapunzel react to their surroundings. Jack and Merida, however, were looking around with interest at the scenery.

"Huh. Berk is a kinda...small island." Jack muttered.

Hiccup raised one eyebrow. "Well, uh, yeah."

Jack sighed. "I'm used to flying over entire continents in one day

when I'm making a really, really big storm. An island this size wouldn't take me more than ten minutes."

"Yeah, until devastating winter hits." Hiccup muttered.

Jack tilted his head. "Just because you haven't invented clothes warm enough to properly enjoy the many wonders of winter..."

Merida rolled her eyes. "Stop it, yu two."

She then blinked as two incredulous stares turned towards her. "Wot?"

"\_You're\_ telling \_us\_ to calm down and stop bickering?" Jack demanded. "You have no room to talk!"

Merida narrowed her eyes, then suddenly grinned. "Well, neither do yu, Sparkles."

Jack nearly fell over. "Sp...sp...what in the name of--"

Merida shrugged. "Well, frost sparkles, does it not?"

Jack simply stared. "B-but...Sparkles? That brings up some ill associated modern cultural references of a sparkly vampire who falls in love with a human girl."

Merida wrinkled her nose. "Ick."

Jack laughed. "I know, right? So no more sparkles or I'll make you watch the movies."

At her blank look, Jack sighed. "It's a projection of moving images onto a screen. I'll show you guys one day."

Hiccup regarded Jack dubiously. "Is that a good thing?"

"Yeah, man!" Jack defended vehemently. "There are so many good movies out there!"

Merida frowned as she crossed her arms. "But now I hafta find a different one."

Jack grinned. "I could start insulting you until a suitable comeback comes to mind." Actually thinking ahead for once, he then jumped out of the sleigh to fly along-side it before adding, "Leprechaun."

Merida lunged, making the sleigh rock perilously.

"Ay, enough of tha'!" Bunny protested in a panic, latching onto the side of the sleigh with a death grip.

"I'll make yu pay for that, yu gaffy albino!"

Jack raised his eyebrows. "Are my eyes pink? Try again, hothead."

Merida mock sighed. "Not as good. Yu're losing yur touch, geezer."

Jack had to land on the wing before he nearly fell yet again.  
"G-geezer?"

Merida grinned. "Well, yu do have quite the head a' white hair, and yu've been around for quite some time."

Jack blinked, wounded. "But...I'm still technically a teenager!" He then glared. "Carrot."

Merida calmly reached for her bow. "I could always call yu 'pincushion'."

Jack eyed her hand warily as he backed to the edge of the wing. "Now why would you do a thing like that?" He then tilted his head. "Though I think that I'll actually stick with calling you Carrots, I was gonna switch to Leprechaun but that's too much of a mouthful."

Merida rolled her eyes. "Lovely. Per'aps I should just call yu 'lazy', would that work?"

Jack shrugged. "Well, yeah, but it doesn't have much effect."

Merida groaned. "Sparkles was perfect, it's not mah fault modern culture got to it first."

Jack shrugged. "Yeah, but watching the movies would quickly show you why not to call me sparkles."

Merida sighed. "A point that I do not dispute." She was silent for a few more moments, then threw her hands up. "Ach! It takes a flash of brilliance, I'm gettin' nothin'."

Jack grinned slyly. "I know." He said sympathetically. "I can't imagine what it must be like in that little brain that can't devote half the functions to insults and still operate on the same level as everyone else's!"

Hiccup grabbed Merida before she did something stupid. "Come on, you guys, we're about to land." He pleaded. "Let's keep casualty to a minimum."

Jack climbed back inside, placing Hiccup in the middle. "So...what should we expect?" He asked.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "I honestly have no clue. But with your...small frame, you'll have to find something to impress them."

Jack glared. "Small frame?"

Hiccup held his hands up. "It's not my fault most Vikings are built like North!"

Jack sighed. "Fair enough."

Hiccup leaned forwards slightly in anticipation when they landed, thankfully a bit more softly than North's usual. Though he hadn't seemed to sacrifice his choice of odd landings, they were parked a

little too close to the edge of the cliff for his liking.

Hiccup quickly scrambled out as a mob of Vikings assessed the potential threat. He waved, and murmurs quieted the threat of attack, to be replaced by hearty congratulations as Hiccup was swarmed by the villagers.

When everyone had calmed down, Stoic pushed his way through the crowd. "Ah, so these are the Guardians! Who are the ones you were workin' with?"

Hiccup looked back to see his friends stepping up alongside him. "These guys."

Stoic nodded at each of the girls, but regarded Jack dubiously. "And you are?"

Jack puffed his chest out. "I am Jack Frost the Maimer!"

Hiccup smacked his forehead in exasperation, but Stoic looked suitably impressed. "Maimer, eh? How do you do it?"

Jack's eyes gleamed as he casually set his staff on the ground. Before any of the Guardians could process the threat, he had frozen all the Senior Guardians solidly to the ground. "Pretty much like that." He then quickly released them before retaliation could occur.

Regardless, he was forced to fly up when Bunny reached for his boomerangs. "He wanted a demonstration, Bunny!" He complained. "No need to get your tail in a knot."

Hiccup rubbed his temples. "Alright, everyone calm down."

Bunny looked away with a huff, but Jack landed with a grin. "So, are you going to do a demonstration or what?"

Hiccup winced when cheers broke out. "Thank you for nothing."

Jack bowed. "You're quite welcome."

Everyone blinked when Snotlout shoved his way through.

Merida eyed him. "And just who is that?"

Hiccup sighed. "That's Snotlout." He then pointed out Fishlegs, who waved shyly. "Aaaand

those two are Ruffnut and Tuffnut." He muttered as the twins forced their way through.

Jack appraised them. "The two you said I'd get along with?"

Hiccup grinned. "Yeah, the mental capacities are pretty equal."

Jack turned a bemused stare on him. "I will make you eat those words."

Hiccup grinned. "Bring it."

In a flash, Jack staff was aimed at him, glowing blue. Jack grinned. "I'd get ready, then, cause it'd be a little embarrassing to lose before the fight started."

Hiccup sighed. "Yes, haha, you're very smart." He held his hand out. "But then, I'm crazy so it doesn't matter."

Jack put his staff back on the ground and leaned on it. "Oh, keep going." He encouraged. "I wanna see this."

Hiccup rolled his eyes, then focused. He could sense the metal underneath him, in a way, and with a few tingles he felt it reluctantly respond. Fighting the urge to open his eyes when startled cries rang out, he kept his eyes closed until something touched his palm.

He opened his eyes when his fingers curled around the handle of an axe. Astrid would be proud. "Well?"

Jack nodded slowly. "But you'd be dead right now in a real fight."

In response, North tossed Hiccup a bundle. He opened it in confusion, then grinned. Putting the

axe on the ground, he quickly freed his sword from the current scabbard, switched them out, and tried the new one. He smirked at North. "Yeah, that's better."

"You'd still be dead..." Jack reminded him.

Hiccup drew his sword and lashed out, but Jack turned and knocked the attack to the side with his staff. He then calmly turned the staff in his hands and whacked Hiccup on the head.

"What is it with you and doing that?" Hiccup protested as he rubbed his aching skull. While doing so, though, he took command of the axe once more. Time to really get crazy.

"I've only done that once before." Jack pointed out. His eyes then flew open as the axe flew into Hiccup's hands and he charged.

Jack dove to the side, recovered, and shot a bolt of ice at Hiccup. Hiccup threw the axe, which took the attack, then dodged to the side, calling his sword to him as he did so.

He managed to last several minutes against Jack in sparring before Jack tripped him and then placed the crook of his staff right under his chin, preventing him from getting up.

"Well, you did better than I thought you would." Jack offered as he helped Hiccup to his feet.

"And that whole magic weapon summon thing was pretty impressive if I do say so myself."

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah, well, it's still in the starting stages."

Jack grinned. "I'm sure."

"How come yu get to have all the fun?" Merida griped, clearly incensed about being left out of the fight.

"You were free to jump in at any time, carrots." Jack told her.

Rapunzel rubbed her thumb along the edge of her frying pan. "Which would have left the odds uneven."

Jack shrugged. "They were uneven anyways. I've got 300 years on you guys, after all."

Rapunzel twitched slightly. "Fair enough."

They were interrupted by Stoic's booming laugh. "Thor almighty! That was quite a show, Hiccup!"

Hiccup nodded, then smiled at Snotlout. "So, you wanna go a few rounds or what?"

He allowed a moment to be satisfied at the poetic justice of the totally shell shocked look on Snotlout's face before he grinned and moved on.

"Anyways, uh, evidently North decided I needed permission before taking the Guardian oath." He continued.

Stoic nodded. "I have no complaints."

"I gathered." Hiccup muttered drily before looking at North.

North, book already in hand, licked his thumb and flipped to the page. "Yes. Will you, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III, vow to watch over the children of the world? To guard them with your life, their hopes, their wishes, and their dreams. For they are that we have, all that we are, and all that we will ever be."

Hiccup allowed a moment to be amused at his ridiculously long name, then nodded. "I will." He said, fighting to keep a solemn face. It didn't work.

North chuckled. "Then, congratulations, for you are now, and FOREVERMORE! a Guardian."

Hiccup smiled as he was tackle-hugged by Rapunzel and Merida. Jack settled for more macho fist-bump, the concept of which Hiccup still didn't quite understand.

Hiccup then looked up as North headed towards the sleigh. Seeming to sense Hiccup's anxiety, North turned back. "Is not yet goodbye." He reassured. "Is still business to take care of, to clean up after Pitch."

"Yeah, right." Jack muttered as he headed towards the sleigh. "He just hates goodbyes."

Hiccup laughed as he clambered in. "Yeah, well, for once I'm ok with delaying the inevitable."

Jack sighed as the sleigh took off. "Yeah, I guess."

Merida smacked her fist into her palm. "Snowball!"

Jack shot Hiccup a pained glance. "On second thought, maybe ditching a certain Guardian wouldn't be such a big problem."

Merida glared. "I heard that."

Jack glared right back. "Yeah, well, I heard the new nickname." He sat up straighter. "What about my amazing, ninja combat abilities suggests something cutesy like a snowball?"

Merida grinned. "Exactly."

Hiccup sighed as he positioned himself in between them. "You know, as crazy as it sounds, I might even miss the bickering."

Rapunzel smiled. "You know, I think I understand the feeling." She then raised an eyebrow as Tooth and Sandy had to hold down Jack and Merida. "Life definitely won't be as interesting."

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Yup! One more chapter to go, it's almost over...

## 38. Chapter 38: Goodbye is not Forever

### Chapter 38:

Jack Frost

Jack tried not to look too downcast as he wandered through the halls of the Pole. All thoughts of that flew from his mind when he heard a voice behind him.

"Aw, is the wee lamb sad about us going home?" Merida inquired in an overly sympathetic tone.

Jack glared at her. "I..." But then, he had one of those brief flashes that he was actually honest with himself. "Yeah. I guess I am kinda sad." He admitted.

Merida was taken aback for a moment, then she smiled. "Well, I have to say I'm happy to hear that, it means I'm not the only one."

Jack grinned at her. "But then, after an adventure like that I don't see how we could ever have come out of it as enemies."

Hiccup laughed as he came up. "At times I think we gave it our very best shot, though."

Jack looked at him. "Where's Astrid?"

Hiccup sighed. "She took Stormfly and Toothless back to Berk. I heard that Eugene took Max back, as well."

"Yeah." Rapunzel muttered sullenly. "As if we needed another reminder that we'll need to say goodbye soon."

Jack nodded. "And, of course, that you most likely won't be coming back unless there's another cataclysmic event that requires reinforcements."

Merida scuffed her foot on the floor. "Way to make us feel necessary."

Jack shrugged. "Do you see any reason why you'd be taken away from your world to stay here? Hmmm?"

Merida smirked. "Cause I want to. As a princess I get those perks."

Rapunzel and Hiccup nodded.

"Besides," Hiccup added, "we have Guardian duties here now."

Jack smiled. "Yup. And hey, come wintertime I'll get to drop in on all your places! Teach you guys how to appropriately appreciate winter."

Rapunzel shrugged. "But not for three more seasons."

Jack grinned. "Two, for Merida and Hiccup. Their climates are cold enough that I can get away with a few small snowstorms in Fall."

Merida shifted, then let out an irritated huff. "Ach, I'm still gettin' depressed just standin' here moanin'! Let's go do somethin'!"

Jack looked at her hopefully. "Like, a prank?"

"I second that motion!" Rapunzel chipped in.

"All in favor?" Hiccup quipped. He then smirked. "Seeing no dissent, the Big Four are in unanimous consent that sowing of chaos and discord is in store. Buckle up."

Laughing uproariously, the four took off down different halls, intent on wreaking the maximum amount of havoc in the least amount of time.

Jack sped down the hall towards the kitchen. Once there, he nimbly leapt up to the rafters before anybody - or any yeti - spotted him. From there he cautiously made his way over to where the stoves were, lightly frosting the metal over. He scurried away, grinning as he heard panicked Yetis hurrying over to the "smoking" stoves as the frost started evaporating. He then froze several plates of candies solid, hardened the centers of a few platters of cookies, and then cooled down all the carafes of coffee. He had never taken a liking to coffee, anyways. He then made his way out of the kitchen after opening several windows near the now cold food.

As he looked for his next target, he spotted Hiccup nonchalantly leaning on the sleigh as he conversed pleasantly with a Yeti. However, Jack noticed that Hiccup was paying a little too much attention to merely be translating Yeti, and his palms were mysteriously placed flush on the side of the sleigh.



Jack shook his head as he raced away. "North is going to be soooo mad..." He muttered.

He then almost ran into Rapunzel, who squeaked and dragged him into a niche right before a platoon of Yetis thundered past.

"Oldest trick in the book." He whispered to her.

"It's the oldest one 'cause it works." She retorted.

Jack grinned. "Fair enough. What'd you do?"

Rapunzel cautiously looked around before emerging into the now empty hallway. "I may or may not have messed around with the reindeer a little."

Jack snickered. "You didn't!"

Rapunzel nodded. "You know, fake reindeer look an awful lot like the actual ones, even if I did give the real ones a day off."

Jack had to wipe his expression clean as some Yetis approached, Rapunzel merely looked off to the side and allowed her hair to obscure her expression. The Yetis made some quiet sounds and hurried past them.

"Acting like a kicked puppy really works, doesn't it?" Rapunzel asked quietly.

"Just remember who taught you that." Jack muttered out of the side of his mouth.

Rapunzel merely looked at him expectantly.

Jack winced as he heard bellowing coming from the kitchen. "Well, let's just say that if you touch certain food items there won't be a problem of getting your mouth burned."

Rapunzel slapped a hand over her mouth to muffle the laughter. "You really are fascinated with messing around in the kitchen, aren't you?" She asked once she had gotten herself under control. "How come you weren't seen?"

Jack shrugged. "It's amazing, really. People never seem to look up."

Rapunzel nodded. "I'll keep that in mind."

Both jumped when a loud clatter was heard from ahead. They then grinned when a plaster-covered Merida emerged, waving her hand in front of her face and trying not to cough.

Merida then gasped when Jack cheerfully blasted her with as cold a wind as possible.

Before she could retaliate, Jack gestured towards her. She looked down to see that she was now plaster free.

She grumpily nodded at him, and Jack responded with a lazy salute

before flying up to a different level. He didn't know what Merida had done, but something told him he didn't want to know, either.

Jack went placidly down the hall, then stopped short when he passed North's empty office. He rapidly backtracked and stuck his head inside. Nothing. He leapt up onto the rafters, made his way over to where North had been working on a prototype made out of ice, and tapped it with his staff, locking the moving joints together in a manner that suggested melting.

Once safely away, he flew over to the globe and landed on top of it, settling down on top of Russia and watching the hubbub beneath him. He put his hand down and inconspicuously spread frost in random patterns so that to anybody looking on it would be 'obvious' that he had been there for quite some time. He then settled down to wait.

Not five minutes later, North appeared on a balcony above him. "Ah, Jack! Where have you been?"

Jack shrugged and pointed at the globe.

North narrowed his eyes. "For how long?"

Jack shrugged again and stood. "Why? You need me for something?" It was a calculated move. Standing let North see the collected frost clearly along with conveying a rather lackadaisical approach that he didn't normally have.

North sighed. "No, is no problem."

Jack shrugged and sat back down. The frost around him, with a little encouragement, immediately started creeping outwards again.

North cleared his throat. "Though, perhaps without shutting down globe."

Jack regarded the frost with surprise. It had covered quite a lot of area. "Uh, not something I can control." He replied sheepishly, flying up to North. "I'll, uh, walk with you, I guess." When North cast him a suspicious glance, Jack rolled his eyes. "I don't really wanna be alone right now." He told North while sheepishly rubbing the back of his head.

North grinned. "Ah, of course. Come! We are gathering in front of plaque."

Jack grinned back. "Sure."

He and North rapidly arrived at the plaque to see everyone else gathered there. Jack winked at Rapunzel, who smirked and passed the wink on. Soon all of them were almost successfully hiding smirks.

Bunny cast them a suspicious look, but was instantly met with four innocently blank faces. Jack turned his face away, shoving his hands into his pocket to turn attention away.

North cleared his throat. "Ah, yes. I gathered you here for a reason. I worried that worlds would separate, so I made a physical link here

at Pole." Thus saying he solemnly led the group around to the other side of the Globe. Once there, both Merida and Rapunzel covered their mouths with a hand. Jack felt moisture behind his eyes, but blinked a couple times to maintain his composure.

On the ground in front of them was a plaque identical to the Guardian plaque. The northernmost section was a light blue with a darker blue background around a likeness of Jack holding his staff. There were snowflakes and frost designs inlaid in the stone, as well as swirling designs around the edges that Jack knew instantly to be the wind.

To the east was a gentle green with a likeness of Rapunzel with short hair but a golden halo around her that extended into a depiction of her old hair. In her hand she held a paintbrush with a rainbow exploding out the tip, and this rainbow swirled around the rest of her plaque forming plants and animals of the color they were touching.

At the south was a scarlet background behind Merida, her hair fanning around her head and bursting into flame at the tip. She held a bow in one hand and a sword in the other, both glowing red. Celtic designs were inlaid around her in dark greens and black.

The western plaque was light brown, with Hiccup standing in front of Toothless with his wings out, stretching to the edges of the plaque. Hiccup held a sword that touched the ground, and golden swirls spread from the tip of the sword. Faint, dark brown images of gears and pulleys decorated the background of the plaque.

"It's...amazing." Jack breathed.

Merida gave North a bear hug, and Rapunzel joined in from the other side.

Hiccup knelt down and ran a finger around one of the gears. "This is incredible." He murmured. "The amount of time this would have taken...you had to have started it when we first arrived."

North smiled. "Though I will admit that certain events made finalizing end design a little difficult."

Hiccup nudged Rapunzel with his elbow. "Yeah, no clue what he's talking about."

Rapunzel smirked, but then cast a worried glance at Jack.

Realizing that she was probably feeling bad about pulling the pranks, Jack gave her his best trickster smirk. She rolled her eyes but smiled as she looked away.

Jack dropped the smirk quickly when North cleared his throat uncomfortably. "Ah, yes." He muttered. "Is now time for new Guardians to return home."

Then the smirk was back when Yeti's came charging in, yelling.

Jack turned to Merida with grudging respect. "You supercharged the heating lines?" He

whispered.

"I was just heatin' pipes." She confessed.

Jack nodded slowly. "Okay, then. Next time you're here remind me to get you up to speed on home convenience technology."

"I'll do that."

North turned a baleful stare on them. "One last hooray?"

Jack rolled his eyes. "It's one last hoorah, North."

North shook his head. "Words are not important thing here."

Bunny crossed his arm. "Aye. Is it impossible for ya to go one day without a prank?"

Jack nodded. "Yeah! I'm pretty sure it wouldn't have been me heating the pipes."

"Then how'd ya know?" Bunny insisted.

Jack rolled his eyes. "The Yetis were announcing it just now. Duh."

"Not everyone speaks Yeti." Bunny defended.

Jack shrugged. "Not my fault."

Hiccup stepped forwards, but was intercepted by North. "Alright, what you break in sleigh?" North demanded.

"Nothing." Hiccup said innocently. "I just slicked the runner skids so that it'd go more smoothly."

Bunny held his ears down. "Ya've got to be jokin'. It was dangerous already!"

North then wagged a finger at Rapunzel. "And Yetis not happy about having to bring back reindeer and clean up paint in stalls."

Sandy shook a cookie at Jack, who busted out laughing at the outraged expression on Sandy's face.

He laughed even harder when North turned a wounded look on him. "The coffee?" North asked. "What you have against coffee?"

"Oh, nothing." Jack replied cheerfully. "I was just worried that someone might burn their tongue!"

"Is the point of coffee to be warm." North grumbled before moving away. He then turned back. "This doesn't mean departure delayed."

Jack sighed. "It was worth a shot."

"Well, regardless." Bunny interjected, now holding an egg-shaped container in his hands. "It's still time for us to take the ankle-bittah's home. But with some insurance."

Thus saying, he handed the container to Rapunzel. "Plant these somewhere, they're seeds from mah warren. Ya'll also find the flowers that North had in your room in there."

Rapunzel looked about two seconds away from crying as she took the egg.

North then took a bundle from a Yeti and handed it to Hiccup. "Tools made for you in workshop by Yetis." He explained.

Hiccup took the bundle reverently, holding it close. "Th...thank you."

North grinned at Merida. "And as for you..." He handed her a box of vials and winked. "Put on tip of arrow." He advised, a mischievous glint in his eyes. "Give someone nasty surprise. That make them magic arrows!"

Jack nodded. "As hard as it is to believe, North can do magic."

Merida took the box gingerly, causing North to laugh loudly. "Is quite safe!" He reassured. "Just keep away from brothers, yes?"

Merida nodded. "I'll tell them they can access it whenever they want cause it's full of dried haggis."

Jack shuddered. "They'd move out of the castle."

Merida narrowed her eyes. "How do yu know what haggis is?"

Jack shrugged. "Americans do have multinational, European heritage. I've seen it prepared. A really long time ago."

Merida nodded. "Fair enough."

North's smile faded as quickly as it had appeared. "Yes, well, is time now."

He produced several snowglobes from his coat. He swirled the first one, yelling, "Berk!"

Jack punched Hiccup good-naturedly in the shoulder. "You wreak havoc, you hear me?"

Hiccup grinned. "I'll send Toothless with a message."

Jack laughed. "A letter would do just fine."

Merida and Rapunzel both hugged Hiccup, then he waved, adjusted his grip on his new tools, and stepped through the portal. North immediately yelled, "Corona!"

Jack grinned. "Dare you to pull the reindeer prank on the palace horses."

Rapunzel laughed and hugged him. "See you later."

Jack hugged her back, laughing. "Pass that on to Eugene."

Rapunzel hugged Merida and stepped through the portal, the egg clasped firmly in her hand.

North sighed, then said, "DunBroch."

Jack eyed Merida then stuck out his hand. "You understand why I'm not hugging you."

Merida laughed and slapped his hand in a high five. "Wouldn't want to melt yu." She teased. She then held the box where the triplets couldn't reach it and walked through the portal.

When the light died, Jack smiled sadly.

"Oh, I'm going to miss them so much." Tooth sobbed.

Jack shrugged. "Eh, we'll see them again. And besides, a guy called Dr. Seuss once said: 'Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.' I've got enough memories to last me 'till we see each other again."

North smiled and said, "Yes, but now must cleanup after pranks."

Jack started. "Well, look at the time! Australia needs some snow!"

He flew off to the sound of North and Bunny yelling his name while Tooth and Sandy cracked up.

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And thus ends the story. I had a lot of fun writing it, and I hoped you guys enjoyed reading it! Keep a lookout for other stories, I shall return!

## 39. Epilogue 1: Generation

### Epilogue 1

Rapunzel Fitzherbert

Rapunzel sat moodily, overlooking her former kingdom. Her 15 year reign had been celebrated as the golden age of Corona, but as she began to obviously stop aging, she had had the uncomfortable experience of having her own subjects walk through her. She had given the throne peacefully over to one of the heirs and quietly disappeared. Sixty years had passed since then, and Eugene had died of old age.

That had been hard.

She stood, intending to do, oh, something, when a familiar flash erupted behind her. She whirled to see a swirling vortex of colors appear out of nowhere. She wasted no time in running through, barreling straight into North's arms.

North's booming laugh filled the Pole. "Ah, is good to have you

back!" North yelled with delight. "And this time, no goodbye."

Rapunzel nodded. "I've said too many of those."

She couldn't stop a grin, though, when a voice sounded, "Awwwwwww, has Punzie had to deal with growing up?"

She rolled her eyes at Jack. "More like not growing up even when m-my parents and Eugene did."

Jack smiled, and pulled Rapunzel into an uncharacteristic hug. "Yeah, that's the worst part of being immortal." He told her, stepping back. "But we're your family now, yeah?"

Rapunzel grinned. "Yeah." Her grin faded, though, when she realized the impact of that first statement.

Bunny bounded in, Tooth and Sandy in tow. "There she is!" Tooth squealed, zipping in for a hug. "Oh, we've missed you so much!"

Bunny and Sandy were a little less demonstrative with their feelings, but only a little.

It took almost three hours for the welcoming back to end, and Rapunzel and Jack were holed up on the roof, where he had flown them both to escape.

Rapunzel looked over at Jack, and said softly, "Jamie?"

Jack let out a soft breath. "Not yet, the kiddo's holding strong. But, what? He's like, eighty something now. It's getting almost impossible to keep visiting him without, well..."

Rapunzel smiled. "But I bet he's got some pretty cute grandkids."

Jack laughed. "You wouldn't believe! There's Mary, she's 11, and then there's Ella, she's 9, and then there's Jamie version 2.0, he's 13, and then there's little...little Jack. He's 6."

Rapunzel smiled. "Jack?"

Jack laughed. "Junior, actually. I've now got two generations that Jamie named after me."

Rapunzel stood. "Shall we?"

Jack laughed, and Rapunzel even managed not to scream when he took off into the air, holding her a little too loosely for her safety.

They landed without difficulty, to see a cheerful old man wave from the porch. Jack grinned and ran up the walk to gently pull the old man into a hug.

"Going strong still, huh kiddo?" Jack asked with a grin.

Jamie chuckled. "Oh, I'm not a kiddo anymore, though I've heard that

certain other kiddos have been eagerly awaiting your arrival."

Immediately kids spilled out onto the porch, gaping at Rapunzel until a teenager pulled Jack into a hug.

Jack laughed. "Hey there, 2.0!" He was immediately mobbed by the rest of the kids.

Jamie laughed, a sound that Rapunzel realized had barely changed in over 70 years.

Rapunzel blinked when Mary and Ella walked over to her. "H-hey."

"Are you Rapunzel?" Ella asked.

Rapunzel nodded slowly.

Mary pouted. "Your hair really did get small."

Rapunzel laughed. "Yeah, but the tradeoff was worth it." She then looked up at Jack. "Speaking of which, North owes me some new paint, the stuff in Corona just can't compare."

She looked up when a man and woman made their way out onto the porch. The man put his arm around Jamie's shoulders and winked at Jack. "Jack."

Jack grinned. "Hey there, Jack."

Rapunzel laughed. "If only I got namesakes."

Jack raised an eyebrow. "Pippa got as close as she could. She named her kid Rachel."

Rapunzel laughed. "Took out the 'punzie', hey?"

Jack laughed. "Well, you know." He then grinned. "And Monty named his kid Hal. Not real close to Hiccup's name, but close enough. Jodie named her kids Mary and Hubert. I took the liberty of telling her the names of the triplets."

Rapunzel smiled, then sighed. "If only the other two were here."

Jack looked up as the Northern Lights painted the sky. "Well, someone's here."

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Mwahaha. Just when you thought this was over. Though thanks goes to firedrakegirl for this idea!

## 40. Epilogue 2: Legacy

### Epilogue 2

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III



Hiccup pushed open the door of the cottage that Mildew used to live in, breathing in the salty air.

It had taken forever to get Mildew's stench out, but it was definitely worth it. He smiled at Toothless.

"Man, though, gotta love that you didn't age either." He told Toothless. Toothless responded by depositing a portion of his breakfast at Hiccup's feet. "Aw, man, still?" Hiccup moaned.

Toothless sniffed, then pounced, nearly bowling Hiccup over, butting him towards his riding tack.

When Toothless had been saddled, some instinct made him grab North's tools and his sword. After taking off, Hiccup spared a glance at Astrid's cottage before the crashing waves and storm clouds hid Berk from sight.

"Which is a rather fitting memory of the last time I'll see that place." Hiccup mused. This time, though, when the portal appeared there was no hesitation in diving through it.

He burst into a blast of frigid wind, and looked over to see Jack and Rapunzel laughing and waving at him. He waved back, and followed Jack down to a landing area.

When he slid off, Rapunzel bounded forwards and hugged him. "That was awesome!" She squealed. "We got here, like, right at the same time!"

Hiccup laughed when Jack rolled his eyes. "Because I totally didn't see the Northern Lights and kinda plan it that way." Jack pointed out sarcastically.

Hiccup smirked. "Oh, though Jack? Your comeuppance is finally here." He announced, patting the hilt of his sword.

Jack twirled his staff lazily. "We shall see, young grasshopper, we shall see."

Hiccup sighed. "I'll assume that's a reference to something in your modern culture. Thanks for nothing."

Jack pouted. "Man, leave you alone for seventy years and suddenly you get all crotchety. Yeesh."

Hiccup wagged his eyebrows. "I'm still determined to make you play tour guide of the modern era, though."

Jack grinned. "Yeah, whatever."

Rapunzel cleared her throat. "Uh, you two popsicles can stay out here, but I'm heading inside." She told them.

Jack and Hiccup grinned at each other, then followed Rapunzel inside.

Hiccup let out a small breath. "Man, place sure hasn't

changed."

Jack grinned and tapped his staff on the ground. Hiccup looked down to see the plaque the Guardians had made for them looking almost as worn in as the original.

"Okay, maybe a little." Hiccup relented as he bent down to touch his section. "I still can't believe how amazing this is."

A passing Yeti made a happy, though garbled comment, and Hiccup made a face at Jack. Jack snickered. "And, if I ever feel like it, I'll teach you Yetish. Happy?"

Hiccup nodded. "You're still playing tour guide, though."

Jack threw up his hands. "Man, you're gonna have me working like a slave here!"

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. "You've got until forever to do it."

Jack laughed. "Yup, that's me, putting the pro in procrastination."

Hiccup shook his head as he stood back up. "Whatever, man."

Jack grinned and patted Hiccup's shoulder. "Well, you're starting to talk like a person in the modern age, so maybe my work here isn't quite so hard as I thought it might be."

"Your willingness to help a friend is exquisite." Hiccup noted sarcastically.

Jack shrugged. "Always." He then started herding Hiccup farther indoors. "But anyways, you have other people who are wanting to say hello."

When Hiccup walked in, he was immediately beset by excited Yetis. Hiccup leaned back and muttered to Jack, "I reiterate: you're teaching me how to understand that."

Jack's reply was lost in North's excited bellows. "Ah, Hiccup, you are here!"

Hiccup grinned. "I would certainly hope so, cause otherwise you got so lonely that you're hallucinating about my presence."

North grinned. "Yes, but then there is fact that someone went through the snow globe from Berk, and here you are."

Hiccup nodded. "Fair enough."

Jack laughed and put his hands behind his head. "So, you ready for carrots to come?"

Hiccup mock groaned. "You mean are you ready for utter chaos to descend once more?"

Jack laughed and patted Hiccup on the shoulder. "Last I remember you were making some pretty impressive contributions in that regard."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Oh, yeah, I was totally on your guys' level."

Rapunzel snickered until Hiccup mouthed 'reindeer' at her. Then it turned into loud peals of laughter that quickly got Hiccup and Jack joining in.

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Yay, this one wasn't sad. Only a couple more, then I really am done. I promise.

#### 41. Epilogue 3: Traditions

Epilogue 3:

Merida DunBroch

Merida smiled as she watched a group of young relatives run past. She didn't even remember which generation this was, and since she hadn't ended up marrying she didn't really know what her relation to them would be. She smirked. Her brothers had ruled well, reigning together peacefully.

Her attention was brought back to the present as a high whisper caught her attention. She looked over to see a wisp appear, seeming to beckon her impatiently.

After making sure that her presence would go unnoticed, she got up and crept after the wisp, who disappeared after countless others formed a trail.

Merida picked up the pace until she was practically flying over the ground when she realized that the wisps were leading her towards the Calendar Stones. When she skidded into the clearing, she realized that the wisps had gathered in the thousands around the stones.

As she approached warily, they all shone brightly, before puffing out in the way she was accustomed to. They then reappeared in a circle behind her right as she heard a sound not unlike glass breaking from far away and a swirling portal appeared.

"Come to say yur goodbye's huh?" She commented to the wisps. She then walked through the portal as the wisps disappeared once more.

On the other side, she stepped out to see a crowd of Yeti's yelling happily. She squeaked in alarm as the portal disappeared and someone was mussing her hair.

She dodged to see Bunny smiling at her. "Yu can't wait a moment or two?"

Bunny grinned. "Just gettin' ya properly riled." He told her. "Ya looked a little bored there, sheila."

She rolled her eyes when she felt a cold breeze. "Bored? Me? Never." She then smirked when a snowball fizzled into steam before it could hit her.

"Hey!" Came Jack's indignant voice. "What was that for?"

Merida turned and smirked. "I figured yu'd try somethin' like that, so I practiced focusing heat in

one area. It works."

"Obviously." Jack muttered as he landed. "If it didn't my welcome would've been properly received." At this Bunny rolled his eyes and left the room with the Yetis, correctly guessing what was highly likely to transpire. Jack watched them go with a bemused expression before continuing, "Oh, well, if at first you don't succeed..."

Before Merida could react Jack had beamed her in the face with a snowball.

"Try again!" He yelled, his voice shaking with laughter.

"That does it, snowball, I'm gonna..." Merida yelled, but was hampered by a flying hug from Rapunzel.

Hiccup helped her off the floor from where she had collapsed from being off balance and slightly dizzy from the extremely strong hug. "Yeah, superhuman strength, check."

"Noticed that, too." Merida defended. "Just not expecting it from..."

"Me?" Rapunzel asked. "Tell that to my frying pan."

"Didn't you used to whack yourself upside the head half the time you used it?" Jack pointed out.

"Just from lack of practice!" Rapunzel insisted, cheeks red with embarrassment. "I suppose you didn't have that great of control over your powers when you first discovered them."

Jack raised one eyebrow. "There is a great amount of difference between wielding the power of a force of nature and wielding the power of a frying pan."

Merida snorted softly, causing Rapunzel to give her an injured I-thought-you-were-on-my-side look. Merida disregarded that as she looked around.

"So any problems crop up while we were gone?" She asked.

Jack shook his head. "You really think I'd have passed on the opportunity to get you guys back over here if there had been?"

Hiccup smiled. "Should I be touched by that?"

Jack shrugged. "If you want to be. I meant it more in that it was so boring without you guys here."

Before Hiccup could say anything, Merida stage whispered to him, "That's his way of sayin' he can't really live without us anymore. I

mean, Guardian of Fun, bored?"

"Perfectly normal!" Jack insisted, looking at something incredibly interesting on a far wall.

Hiccup jostled him with his elbow. "Aw, come on, you missed us."

Jack regarded him out of the corner of his eyes. "Maybe, but you know what I missed more?" He asked, his gaze lighting with the spark of mischief.

Merida couldn't help but supply that answer. "The pranks."

Jack smiled, furtively looked around, then pulled out a snowglobe. "So...you guys ever seen the Warren?" He asked.

Merida smiled and replied, "No, but I've heard that it can be a tad boring unless measures are taken to liven it up."

Jack checked a clock on the wall. "Alright, I estimate we have about two hours. Let's move, team!" He then whispered, "Warren!", and they all stepped through the portal before anyone returned.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXxx

Alrighty! And with that, the epilogues are TECHNICALLY done, though I might add in another chapter just because I'm not mean enough to leave you guys hanging on the prank of a century. It just might be a while because such things require tedious planning to ensure maximum hilarity.

## 42. Epilogue 4: The Big Prank

### Epilogue 4:

#### The Big Four

(Okay. I have no idea how this'll work but the idea is that each time the perspective shifts, time relapses. So in theory, time rewinds and for each perspective it's like the previous one hadn't already completely happened. So hey, if you've got a favorite, go ahead and read theirs first.)

\*Jack Frost\*

Jack smirked at everyone when they landed in the Warren. "Alright. The main thing to avoid here is his egg golems. And those are pretty slow, so we should be just fine. And, hopefully, you all have refined your skills over these past seventy years so I shouldn't have to detail what kind of havoc you should wreak. Though to inspire creativity, he has giant lakes of rainbow dye."

He got a couple eyerolls for that, but shrugged and flew up into the sky, heading for the lakes of dye. When he arrived, he hovered just barely above the surface of the liquid. Even from there, his power reacted and the lake started freezing over, covering the dye with a shimmering layer of colors frozen in crazed swirls.

Once a suitable standing place had been created, he delicately landed and began his work in earnest. Soon enough, he was skidding around, thickening the ice until it was frozen as solid as his pond. He flew up and grinned at his handiwork, then hastened on to locate another lake. There couldn't be just one. He took one of the safer bets, flying along a colorful river and turning the cheerful liquid into a less cheerful slush. But hey, watching the colors slowly morph instead of all just running together into a rather sad pink color was totally worth it. At least this way some of the more aesthetic colors came through.

Once that was done and he had frozen several other smaller lakes, he started darting between pillars of rocks, layering them with elaborate whorls of frost that he shaped into rabbits and eggs. He grinned. "And Bunny said I wasn't an artist."

Struck by a sudden impulse, he flew up to harder to reach areas and, snickering madly, began shaping candy canes, presents, bells, and the like out of frost so thick that it was extremely noticeable and highly unlikely to melt for a good long time.

He then flew up and headed towards the river again. It had loosened up somewhat because of the fact that the water was moving, so he gave it a little more encouragement to remain in a slushy form before heading back to where they had all met up. He knew from experience that little acts like freezing a giant lake of dye took longer than they seemed to.

~Rapunzel Fitzherbert~

When she landed inside the Warren, it was if life around her stopped for a few moments. She looked around, taking in the beautiful scenery and the blessed spring warmth that was in stark contrast with the frigid Pole. Her reverie was broken by a cold breeze signaling that Jack had finished his speech and flown off.

Having a good idea what Jack had told them, she ran off in a different direction, pulling out her paintbrush and freshly restocked paints. When she came to a clearing, she darted into the shadows when she saw an egg golem thunder slowly past.

\_He wasn't kidding about those.\_ She mused, vaguely remembering Jack commenting on the low speed of the things. When the coast was clear, she deftly slipped through a crevice until she was in a slightly rockier place. She then started painting as many bunny rabbits as she could, bringing them to life in waves whenever she ran out of room. When she had a veritable army, she grinned at them. "No eating." She commanded sternly. "Besides that, go for it so long as there isn't too much destruction."

She stepped out of the way in time for an approaching golem to be run down by wave after wave of cute, cuddly bunnies. While it was distracted, she ghosted past and flitted from one pillar of stone to another until she found a place where she could clamber up without much difficulty.

She gasped when she caught sight of a rather large, colorful lake that was now sporting a glittering layer of ice over it. "W-wow..." She muttered. "Bunny'll kill him for that."

She then remembered what her set task had been and started painting creeper vines. When she brought them to life, she rapidly scrambled down off the rock as they started creating a dense network of vines overhead. She stretched and realizing that if Jack had frozen such a large lake over while she was making small rabbits, time was probably pretty much up, she started heading back to their clearing.

+Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III+

Hiccup gaped as he looked around the Warren, but when Jack started his debrief he payed close attention. After Jack had flown off, Hiccup climbed up a boulder to inspect the area. He decided on a patch of rock likely to yield high concentration of ore and headed towards them, dodging a golem on the way. When he arrived at the rocks, he placed one hand lightly on one.

He grinned when he felt the ore inside, almost begging to be used for something. Well, he wasn't about to disappoint. He quickly started carefully extracting as much ore as he could without harming the integrity of the rock. He was here to create, not destroy, after all.

When he had gathered roughly enough raw ore, he began to shape it into structures, calling forth minerals that colored the metal. When he was done, he stepped back and grinned at his pretty accurate life-size model of North's sleigh suspended in the rocks. Bunny would be so furious.

He then set out, climbing up and moving around by jumping from rock to rock. It was by this method that he found one area completely covered in vines. "Seriously, Rapunzel?" He muttered, but shrugged. It made his life easier, after all. He began to pick up speed, running lightly along the top of the vines until he arrived back at the meeting place, where Rapunzel was and Jack was coming in for a landing. Hiccup regarded them both. "Dare I ask what Merida's doing?"

Merida DunBroch

Merida rolled her eyes when she landed in the Warren. From Bunny's normal demeanour she hadn't been expecting something so...colorful. She half listened to Jack's little tirade about something or other, then ran off when everyone set out. If there was something to be dealt with, she was pretty confident she could handle herself.

That conviction lasted until she had to dart behind a grassy bank when she saw a giant stone egg walk slowly past, a tree trunk fixed on its head like it was nothing.

That's when she grinned, and once the egg had passed in front of her, she squirmed forwards, intent on getting a free ride. Which is also when she saw the angry face on the back of the egg.

She flattened back down. "Fine." She muttered crossly. "No fun."

She almost smacked herself for saying that, but then the egg rounded a corner and she was off again. As she ran, she mulled over the pranks she could pull since her powers were largely destructive, unlike her counterparts.

She had to stifle a yelp as a small rabbit darted past her feet. And had it been...green? She then saw it again and realized that Rapunzel had made them.

"So the wee lamb proves to be the most irksome." She commented, noticing that there was quite a bit of evidence that there were many, many more of the little creatures running around than the one she had just seen.

She then grinned as an idea struck her, actually caused by her remembering the end of Jack's "tirade". She ran over to a lake, only to skid when she saw it was frozen over. "Jack..." She growled. "I needed that lake!" She then dashed off in another direction, thankfully finding a liquid dye pool.

She held her hand out over it, and steam rose from it. She gingerly started focusing the heat on certain areas more than others, and was rewarded by rock hard clumps of dye that she carefully fished out of the lake.

She held those in one hand as she ran back to an outcropping of rocks, selected one, and started drawing.

She wasn't sure how much time had passed, but when she straightened she regarded her picture of a kangaroo with immense satisfaction. She wasn't sure the representation was completely accurate, but having Jack describe it and using Bunny as a reference she was pretty sure she'd captured the general idea.

She then dusted her hands off, using her power to make sure no dye was left to incriminate her, then started running back towards the meeting place.

She burst into the clearing right as Hiccup said "-ida's doing?"

"I believe I was winning the prank war." She replied.

Jack tilted his head. "Pray tell."

She grinned. "I superheated some of the dye from the lake into somethin' to draw with and I left Bunny a lovely image of a kangaroo in all it's glory."

Jack nearly fell over, laughing. "And I thought freezing half the lakes and rivers over while doodling with frost was bad!"

Rapunzel nodded. "Not to mention the army of tiny cuddly bunny wabbits and the slough of creeper vines."

Hiccup nodded. "But I win." At everyone's expectant look, he smiled and said, "Life-size and fully colored model of \_the sleigh\_."

Silence reigned, then Merida sighed. "Yu're right. Yu win."

Jack held up a snow globe and coughed lightly. "Anyways."

# The Big Four #



(In other words, third person omniscient.)

They all stepped out into an out of the way room, and Jack smirked. Then Phil walked in and pointed at him accusingly.

"Hey, we were just catching up!" Jack told him, sounding wounded. Phil nodded and walked away after telling Jack something.

"What did he say, and what happened to honesty?" Rapunzel asked.

"I was honest!" Jack insisted. "We were catching up on seventy years worth of pranks! And as for what Phil said, we should go find the Guardians."

They all filed into the globe room right as the Guardians, sans Bunny, entered. "Oh, hey guys." Hiccup greeted them. "Sorry, we kinda had seventy years of backlog to sort through."

North was about to accept that and move on when Bunny hopped in, steaming.

"Yeah, backlog that I was on the receiving end of!" He shouted.

Jack leaned over and whispered to Merida, "Think he found it all?"

A smirk twisted onto her face as she replied softly. "He certainly wasn't down there while we were, we woulda been caught. As such I don't think he had time."

They presented innocent faces to North when he looked their way. Rapunzel felt a thrill of victory, though, when she saw the barely suppressed mirth in North's eyes.

She discreetly poked Jack, muttering, "snowflake", to him.

Jack nodded, closed his hand for a moment, and suddenly a snowflake had rapidly floated over to land on North's nose before the large Russian could dodge.

Loud roars of laughter immediately burst forth. "A sleigh!" North gasped. "Oh, is perfect!"

Merida bit down a smug, "That's all?", knowing that Bunny knew full well that wasn't all that had transpired, and letting him in on the secret this soon would get rid of half the fun.

Returning to the more pertinent subject, Hiccup spoke up, "So, I heard mention of food? More specifically, lots of food present at a party?"

Bunny's ears flattened, "After what ya gumbies just did ta ma Warren?"

North patted Bunny's shoulder, still helplessly shaking with laughter. "Ah, is one prank, and has been seventy years. Give them break."

Jack's face lit up. "Sweet!"

North wagged his finger. "You're all on Naughty List."

Jack grinned, putting his hands behind his head jauntily. "Well, y'know, wouldn't want to break my streak or anything."

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

>Okay! Finally done this time, I swear! Hope you guys enjoyed, and be on the lookout for my next story, but this one is OFFICIALLY and COMPLETELY done!<p>

End  
file.